1ST BIRTHDAY ISSUE!

BOARD THE PIRATES' GALLEON IN OUR 11-PAGE PULL-OUT ENCOUNTER

SHOULD YOU BUY THE AD&D CORE RULES?

arcane

the gaming mag

ROLEPLAYING | COLLECTABLE CARD GAMES

On the road again

Get your players on the move for some very different campaigns

Gaming heaven

We conjure up the games we'd like to see

STAR WARS

Why the new edition is a force to be reckoned with

the power and the glory

Immerse your characters in political intrigue and bring some mystery into your scenarios!

REVIEWED THIS ISSUE

Blood Dawn • Star Trek CCG • Rod of Seven Parts • Silent Death • Chaos Progenitus • Fritz Leiber's Lankhmar • Six Guns and Sorcery • GURPS Alternate Earths • And lots more...

9 771360 747003

NOVEMBER 96 • ISSUE TWELVE £3

MANBEASTS

KICKER PACK 4: THE FERAL

Nature calls...and the Feral answer. Half-man, half-beasts charge into battle with savage ferocity in Kicker Pack 4: *The Feral*. Rhinos, bears, lions, wolves, and more gore, slash, and trample through enemy lines. Your armies will cower in fear—unless you get them on your side first!

DRAGON DICE™ Kicker Pack 4: *The Feral* • 8 randomly assorted dice from a new race plus expanded rules • TSR #1504 • Sug. Retail $6.95; CAN $10.95; £4.99 U.K. Incl. VAT • ISBN 0-7869-0467-4

&

EXPANSION SET: MAGESTORM!

The mages of Esfah harness new powers to create tools of destruction. New *magical items, artifacts, Dragonkin,* and *minor terrains* revolutionize battlefield tactics in the DRAGON DICE™ Expansion Set: *Magestorm!*—and escalate the conflict. Equip your armies—or they'll die!

DRAGON DICE Expansion Set: *Magestorm!* • 21 randomly assorted dice and expanded rules • TSR #1505 • Sug. Retail $12.95; CAN $18.95; £9.99 U.K. Incl. VAT • ISBN 0-7869-0468-2

MAGIC

New rare dice. New special powers. New ways to win. Now on sale.

TSR Ltd. • 120 Church End • Cherry Hinton • Cambridge, England • CB1 3LB • ☎ 44-1223-212517 • Fax 44-1223-248066

® and ™ designate trademarks owned by TSR, Inc. ©1996 TSR, Inc. All rights reserved.

DICEMASTER™

ICE Inc. and Hobbygames Ltd. present *Dicemaster*,™ an exciting new fantasy dice game. Now players can enjoy complete, character-based adventures with nothing more than a beautiful set of custom-crafted dice. *Dicemaster's* tremendous replay value and broad array of intricate die images set it apart from the other dice games on the market. No other dice game offers you so many gaming options, or such wonderful artwork.

Dicemaster employs a customizable collection of beautifully tooled dice, which bear over 100 different, easily readable images. They complement the game's remarkably clean but sophisticated game system.

You can play a fast-paced, stand alone game or call upon the vast supply of extremely varied and flexible expansion sets.

It only takes about fifteen minutes to master the *Dicemaster* rules. Then you just grab your dice, pick a character, and start your quest. Your adventurer embarks on a series of journeys, hoping to be the first to gather the six clues necessary to complete a cryptic mystery. The first to solve the puzzle wins the game. Travel afar, battle monsters, and challenge your opponent with all sorts of clever trouble.

The first three titles in the Dicemaster line include:

- **Cities of Doom**™ (Basic Set)— The ≈8"x 8"x 1" box contains a durable, vacu-formed dice tray, thirty-one 6-sided dice (D6), and one 8-sided die (D8). The set includes five 22mm, seven 16mm, and twenty 18mm dice. Each player will need a Basic Set in order to play the game. Two players can play the "Basic Game" if they each have a *Cities of Doom* set. ($24.95)

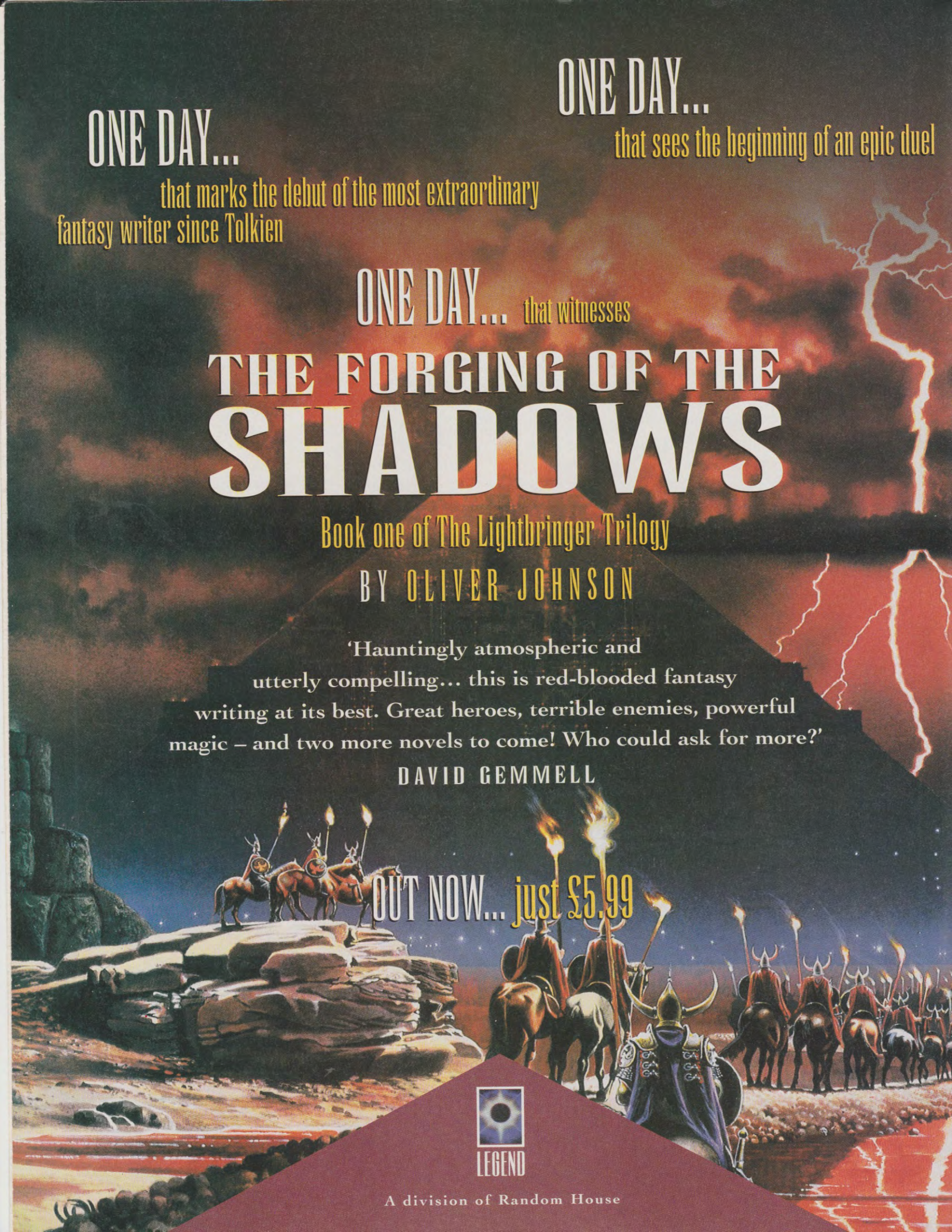
- **Wilds of Doom**™ (Wilderness Set) — The ≈4"x 4"x 4" box contains 26 dice, including thirteen 16mm dice, eight 18mm, and five 22mm dice (three 6-siders, one 10-sided die, and one 12-sided die). You also get a dice bag and tray. Two players can play the "Wilderness Game" if , between them, they have one *Wilds of Doom*.($19.95)

- **Doom Cubes**™ (Booster Sets) — Each ≈4"x 4"x 2" box contains a dice tray and 8 dice (including either one 10-sided die or one 12-sided die). Once either or both players introduce(s) one or more *Doom Cubes*, they can play the "Advanced Game." ($5.95)

IRON CROWN ENTERPRISES, INC.
P.O. Box 1605
Charlottesville, VA 22902
Tel:1(800) 325-0479 or (804) 295-4280
Fax: (804) 977-4811, e-mail:vaice@aol.com,
web page: http://www.ironcrown.com

HOBBYGAMES, LTD., U.K.
Unit S4, Rudford Industrial Estates
Ford Airfield, Near Arundel
West Sussex, UK BN18 0BD
Tel: +44 0(1903) 730998, Fax: +44 0(1903) 731141
e-mail:hguk@pavilion.co.uk, web page: http://www.hobbygames.com

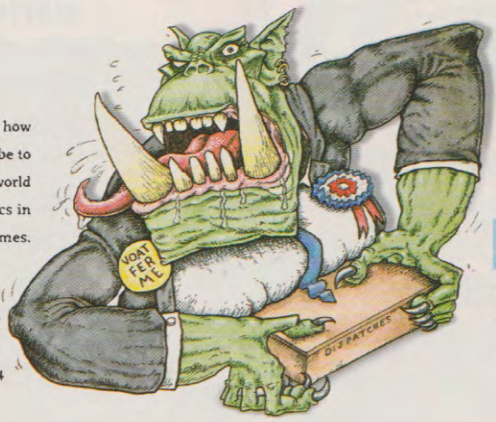
Copyright © 1996 IRON CROWN ENTERPRISES, Inc. (Charlottesville, Virginia USA) and HOBBYGAMES, LIMITED (West Sussex, UK). The 'Burning Die,' *Dicemaster*, *Cities of Doom*, *Wilds of Doom*, *Doom Cubes*, and all icons and images used therein, are trademark properties of Iron Crown Enterprises (ICE) and Hobbygames. All rights reserved.


ONE DAY...
that marks the debut of the most extraordinary fantasy writer since Tolkien
ONE DAY...
that sees the beginning of an epic duel
ONE DAY... that witnesses
THE FORGING OF THE SHADOWS
Book one of The Lightbringer Trilogy
BY OLIVER JOHNSON
'Hauntingly atmospheric and utterly compelling... this is red-blooded fantasy writing at its best. Great heroes, terrible enemies, powerful magic – and two more novels to come! Who could ask for more?'
DAVID GEMMELL
OUT NOW... just £5.99
LEGEND
A division of Random House

arcane

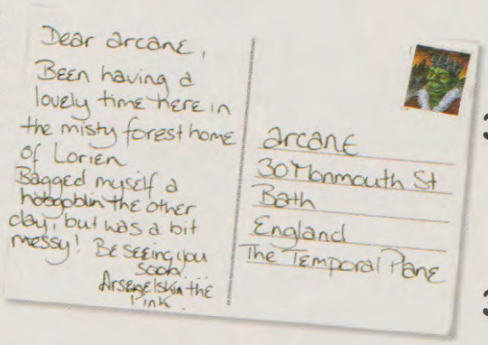
CONTENTS

November 1996 • Issue 12



Discover just how much fun it can be to launch into the world of politics in roleplaying games.

The Power and the Glory cover feature on page 24


Dear arcane,
Been having a lovely time here in the misty forest home of Lorien. Bagged myself a hobgoblin the other day, but was a bit messy! Be seeing you soon.
Arsene Is In the Pink.
arcane
30 Monmouth St
Bath
England
The Temporal Plane

Board with having your campaigns set in the same old place? Then get your characters on the move in true road movie style.

On the Road Again feature on page 32

How do the members of your gaming party vote? You should find out, because it affects the way they play games!

Patriot Games feature on page 56

The latest version of the *Star Wars* RPG brings back the magic of the 70s film. And it gets this month's Seal of Approval.

Star Wars review on page 60

FEATURES

24 The Power and the Glory
Getting characters involved in the politics of the campaign world can bring a new lease of life to any game. Our lead feature discusses political intrigue, political systems and how to use them to create interesting scenarios

30 Games for a Laugh
The **arcane** team comes up with the somewhat less-than-serious games it wishes it was reviewing this month...

32 On the Road Again
Road movies are the ideal inspiration for a very different type of campaign. So, how about getting your characters on their merry way?

37 New Fantasy Settings: Part III
Another crop of brave new worlds in which to set your fantasy roleplaying games. This month, we get all enlightened on you

41 The Encounter: The Pirate Ship
This month's Encounter takes you on a trip to the high seas (with very unpleasant company indeed)

54 The Source
More strange oddities vaguely related to roleplaying and fantasy gaming

56 Patriot Games
Just why is it that the political persuasion of your fellow gamers shapes the way they act in your gaming sessions?

REVIEWS

59 Games Reviews
More than 20 new roleplaying games, collectable card games and related scenarios and supplements get reviewed in this month's bumper section, including *Star Wars, AD&D Core Rules* and the *Star Trek* CCG

80 The Great Library
The month's new book releases get read, then reviewed and rated

REGULARS

7 Up Front
The editor deliberates

8 Despatches
The latest gaming news

17 Andrew Rilstone
Gets on his high horse

19 On the Soapbox
Women in fantasy art (again)

21 Play-by-mail
Takes to the depths of space for this month's special

23 *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & OS*
The (strange) Retro review

52 Back Issues & Subs
Spend some cash

84 arcane Scribblings
Have your say

87 The Internet
Welcome to our Web site

88 Reader Ads
Save the USS Bozeman!

90 Gnome World
The penultimate part!

A new dimension in compute role playing.

free offer QUEST

A great fantasy adventure through a world of powerful gods, strange magic and dream cities: Of QUEST mystical beasts guarding untold treasures. Take up your spell books and sword and begin your Quest.

- Select your party of adventures from the 16 character types.
- Seek your fortune in the wilderness.
- Explore the depths of the earth.
- Find employment in the towns and cities.
- Research new spells and magic.
- Gain favour with the gods through prayer and great deeds.
- Do battle against the creatures of darkness and other players.
- Full-time programmer continually adding new features.

Special Features

- Hundreds of Players to interact with.
- Detailed graphic maps each turn.
- Town, cities, caves and monster la to be discovered.
- Thousands of monsters to fight.
- Free player produced newsletter.
- Vast multi-level dungeons to explore.
- Eight powerful Gods to worship.
- Hundreds of items to buy and sell

Rules, set-up and first turn **FREE** WORTH £5.00

Rules, set-up and first 3 turns **FREE** WORTH £10.00

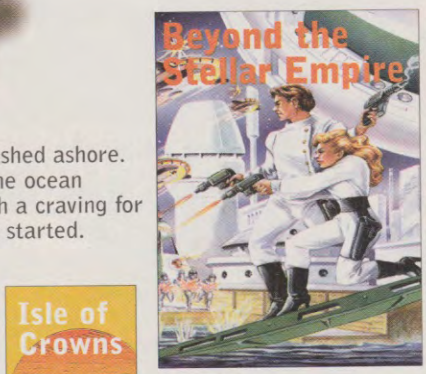
MONSTER ISLAND

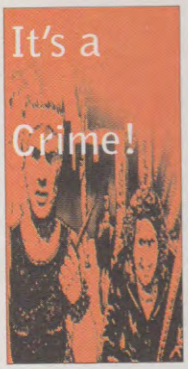
You're washed up on the beach of a beautiful tropical island. Or is it? When your travel guide fails to turn up you soon realise this is a one way ticket. But don't hang around– you're being watched.

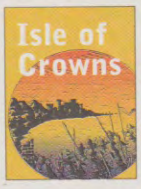
KJC GAMES — PLAY BY MAIL SPECIALISTS — No.1

You think your troubles are over when you're washed ashore. Oh no! With your favourite sword lost beneath the ocean waves and a 12 foot Octopaw staring at you, with a craving for your eyeballs as hors d'oeuvres, they've only just started. Welcome to Monster Island...

- Seven different Monster Races to choose from.
- Make your own weapons and armour.
- Hundreds of unique treasure items.
- Laser printed terrain map each turn.
- Magic and Voodoo.
- Cave delving and graveyard looting.
- Trading post, far inns and NPC races.

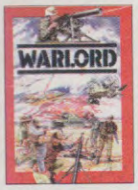






The World of Play by Mail

Established in 1981 KJC are Europe's No.1 Play by Mail organisation. Our games are operated in 10 other countries and 5 different languages. Some of our titles include fantasy role playing, science fiction, street crime, war games and even a soccer league.



In the world of play by mail they're on a different planet!

Get into to a different world by sending the coupon to

KJC Games
Freepost
Offer ARC12
Thornton Cleveleys
Lancashire
United Kingdom
FY5 3BR

Choose between two great adventures.

FREE Quest Rule Book, Set-up and First 3 Turns — WORLD 1	FREE Monster Island Rules , Set-up and First Turn — WORLD 2
Name	Name
Address	Address

YOU CAN CONTACT US AT

KJC GAMES
Thornton Cleveleys
Lancashire, UK, FY5 3LJ

Tel: 01253 866345
Fax: 01253 869960
email at
enquiry@KJCGAMES.com

arcane is this issue

UP FRONT

arcane
30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW
Tel +44 (1225) 442244 Fax +44 (1225) 732252
e-mail arcane@futurenet.co.uk
web site http://www.futurenet.co.uk/

Paul Pettengale Editor
pettengale@futurenet.co.uk

Andy Butcher Deputy Editor
abutcher@futurenet.co.uk

Maryanne Booth Art Editor

Jenny Price Design Assistant

Writers and Editorial
Dan Abnett, Alex Bund, David Cornford, Matthew Green, Clare Johnson, Gideon Kibblewhite, Andy Lanning, Phil Masters, Jonathan Palmer, Andrew Rilstone, Jonathan Smith, Jim Swallow, Ken & Jo Walton, Trenton Webb and Paul White

Photography **Rick Buettner**

Illustration **David Atkinson, Andrew Currie, Andrew Dixon, Simon Gurr, Keith Jackson, Alexis Leosatos and Stephen Lillie**

If you're having trouble getting hold of **arcane** *contact...*
Pete Walker Circulation Manager

If you would like to subscribe you should telephone 01225 822511, fax 01458 274378, or write to
arcane subscriptions
Future Publishing, Freepost BS4900
Somerton TA11 7BR

Advertising
Dominic Beaven Advertising Manager
dbeaven@futurenet.co.uk

Adrian Hill Classified Supervisor
ahill@futurenet.co.uk

Darren Pierce Sales Executive

Richard Bogie Business Development Manager

Simon Moss Group Advertising Manager

Business
Jim Douglas Publisher
jdouglas@futurenet.co.uk
Liz Ramsay Publicity Manager
Tel 0171 331 3920

Overseas Licencing
Mark Williams
Tel 0171 331 3920 Fax 0171 331 3929

Management
Managing Director **Greg Ingham**
Chairman **Nick Alexander**

Production
Group Production Manager
Judith Green
Production Manager
Richard Gingell
Production Co-ordinator
Zoe Rogers
Print Services Manager
Matthew Parker
Paper Controller
Fiona Deane
Pre-Press Services Manager
Jon Moore

The subscription rate for 12 issues is:
UK £33 **Europe** £45 **US** £57.75 **Rest of World** £61.75

arcane acknowledges and recognises all manufacturers' and artists' trademarks and copyrights. Where possible we acknowledge the copyright holder. If there are any oversights, please contact us.

arcane is printed in the UK by **TPL Printers** (UK) Ltd
ABC Member of the **Audit Bureau of Circulation**

All content © **Future Publishing 1996**

This issue would have been impossible without...
A sense of humour
This issue would have been a lot easier without... **long lunches (Maryanne!)**

It's always good to hear what you think of **arcane**, so feel free to send me your comments. Write to the Editor at the **arcane** address on the left, or e-mail: pettengale@futurenet.co.uk

Want to get in contact with other gamers in your area? Then you should take advantage of our free Reader Ads service. Turn to page 88 and fill in the form.

GenCon at Loughborough University was a roaring success, especially for those of us who made it up from the **arcane** office here in Bath. Over the busy four days we managed to meet dozens of **arcane** readers, giving us the chance to learn first-hand what you think of the magazine, and the state of the roleplaying hobby in general. So, a big 'hello!' to all of you that we bumped into over the weekend – I hope you had as good a time as we did.

Since we got back from GenCon we've been working flat-out to get this issue out of the door. Hopefully you'll agree with me that it's our best yet. This issue, **arcane** 12, marks a special occasion – **arcane**'s first birthday. There are some people out there who thought we'd never make it this far, and yet a year on and **arcane** is going from strength to strength. We are in the process of tying up a number of foreign licensing deals, which is fabulous news, and we're managing to sell more and more copies of the magazine each month. The future is bright for your favourite roleplaying and collectable card game magazine.

"A year on and arcane is going from strength to strength... The future is bright."

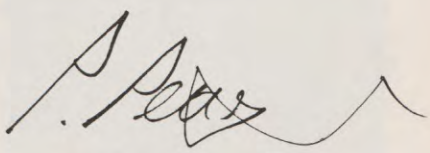
This issue we're taking a look at all things political – concentrating on how referees can embroil characters in the world's political scene. Games which involve players in political intrigue can make for some fascinating roleplaying experiences, as I hope our cover feature, which starts on page 24, makes perfectly clear.

Continuing the political theme of the issue is a provocative feature by Jonathan Smith, which examines how the political persuasions of the members of your roleplaying group can influence the way they, and you, play. It's called Patriot Games, and you can find it on page 56.

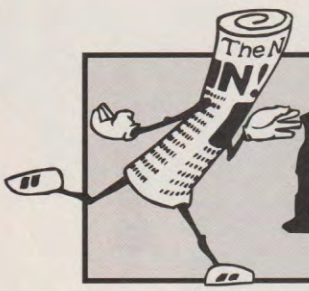
Of course, the other features in this issue of **arcane** examine other spheres of the gaming hobby. On the Road Again, which starts on page 32, looks to road movies, such as *Thelma and Louise* and *Easy Rider,* for inspiration for your roleplaying campaigns. I think you'll find it enlightening. And then there's our somewhat less-than-serious look at the games we wish were in print, from just about every genre, which starts on page 30. The live-action *Coppit* game sounds like it should be top of everyone's Christmas list.

On the reviews front this month we've got an extremely mixed bag. We're still wallowing in the wake of both the US and the European versions of GenCon, so there are dozens of new roleplaying games and supplements which are finding their way into our reviews section. Of note this month we've got the *AD&D CD-ROM Core Rules,* which has all of the major books in the *AD&D* range stored on a single disc (with a whole lot more besides), the massive *Rod of Seven Parts* campaign (also for *AD&D),* the new version of the *Star Wars* roleplaying game (which is absolutely stunning), and the *Star Trek* CCG, which has finally reached our shores. The reviews start on page 59.

As we slowly near our Christmas issue, I'm still interested to discover what you think are your favourite ten roleplaying games of all time. As you may remember from issue 10, we intend to run a feature listing the 50 most popular RPGs ever, and to do this we need your help. To make things easier for you, we've included a form in our Despatches section. I hope you find the time to fill it in and send it to the **arcane** office.



Paul Pettengale
Editor



DESPATCHES

Welcome to the Null Cosm

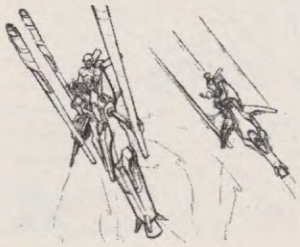
White Wolf releases more details of its science fiction roleplaying game.

COMING SOON

AS FIRST REPORTED in **arcane** 8, Mark Rein•Hagen, designer of *Vampire: The Masquerade,* has spent the last year working on a science fiction roleplaying game, due for release early next year. The company has now announced that the game, *Exile,* will be the first in a line of releases in the new Null Cosm setting.

"Exile is the science fiction game I always wanted to play, but no-one ever wrote it," says Mark Rein•Hagen. "I've been working on this setting for over a decade, but it

was only a year ago that we finally figured out how to make it work. I love high adventure and dark peril, but I also wanted a realistic, dynamic and complex setting. I love suspense and drama, but I also wanted a touch of horror and shadow of the strange. I love space opera, but I wanted it to be hard-core and gritty. *Exile* is all that and more."



The Null Cosm, the setting for the game, is a vast far future universe ruled by the Hegemony, an opulent society that has existed largely unchanged for thousands of years. Citizens live in virtual paradise, with their every need and wish catered for by robots and high technology, and almost any luxury available to them at whim.

But the Hegemony has survived for so long by maintaining a strict order to its society. The Great Syndics, vast political and economic power blocks, are dedicated to keeping their power and controlling the course of the empire. Change cannot be accepted, and anyone who voices their discontent is seen as a danger to the very core of the society. Those who do so are banished to the frontier of the Grange, never to return.

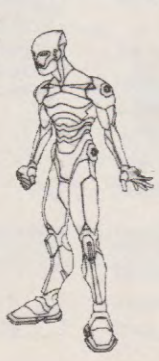
"The Null Cosm itself will remain the property of those who create it."

In *Exile,* the players' characters have all, for one reason or another, been cast out from their comfortable lives and forced to seek a new life in the Grange. With only seven days' notice they must beg, borrow or steal everything they can, and leave forever. They can become mercenaries, traders, privateers, smugglers, spies, explorers or simple wanderers – the possibilities offered by the Grange are limitless.

Almost as interesting as the game itself, though, is the way in which White Wolf has decided to deal with its production. Although the company will be publishing the game itself, it has signed over all the copyrights and trademarks to a newly formed, non-profit organisation, the Null Foundation. This will be organised and run by the designers and artists who create and develop the Null Cosm setting, which it will license to White Wolf for publication. The people whose work is used in any published material will be paid by White Wolf under terms set out by the Null Foundation, which will itself get a royalty for the use of the setting as a whole.

The idea is that the Null Cosm itself will remain the property of those who create it, and will thus remain free of any commercial influence. "Looking at the history of art it is clear that the most popular creations of artists inevitably come under the control of those with no artistic vision. The art becomes the slave of commerce, and the initial dreams and visions of the creators are lost, or worse, corrupted," explains the Null Foundation's prospectus. Subtle digs at the business practises of some other games companies aside, it does seem that White Wolf is sincere about the idea, and it'll be very interesting to see how the set-up works out in practise.

Ø NULL FOUNDATION



We'll bring you more news about *Exile* and any further releases in the Null Cosm setting in future issues of **arcane**, and look out for a full review of the game early next year. In the meantime, if you'd like to find out more about the Null Foundation, check out its Web site at `http://www.null-f.org` where you can find out how to join the Foundation and, for those who can't wait, download a playtest version of the *Exile* rules.

The X-Files Collectable Card Game

NXT Games prepares to reveal the Truth.

The long-awaited collectable card game based on the horrifically popular *X-Files* series is nearing completion. The original released date of 21st October has been pushed back slightly due to changes in the game's production schedule, but fans will be pleased to hear that it should still be out before the end of the month.

The game puts players in charge of a team of FBI agents trying to solve their opponent's X-File. To aid in your task you have access to Equipment, Witness and Event cards, all of which help your agents in their investigations of Site cards. At the same time, though, your opponent can play Adversary, Bluff and Event cards to make your life difficult, while you do the same to him. The cards you play allow you to ask various questions about the X-File you're trying to solve, in a similar manner to the classic games *Clue* and *Mastermind*. The first player to successfully deduce (or, if it comes to it, guess) the opponent's X-File wins.

COMING SOON

The basic set of the game will feature 354 cards, covering all the episodes from the first two seasons of the show, and can be played in two ways – a simpler, Basic Game or the more complex Advanced Game, which expands the rules and options open to players and is aimed at the more serious gamer or *X-Files* fan. An expansion set adding the third season is already being planned.

Look out for a full review of *The X-Files Collectable Card Game* soon. For more information about the game, including some early versions of the rules, take a look at NXT Games' World Wide Web site at `http://www.nxtgames.com`

Silent Striders Tribebook

The most mysterious of the werewolf tribes is revealed.

Coming soon from White Wolf is the very latest Tribebook for *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*. This time it's the Silent Striders who come under scrutiny, and the book promises to uncover many of the wandering tribe's secrets.

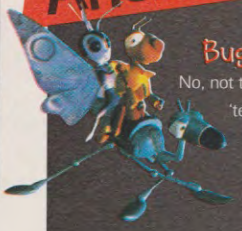
Silent Striders is one of the most secretive and least understood of all the Garou tribes. Originally descended from Egyptian werewolves, Silent Striders are great explorers, and have many dealings with spirits, elementals and even mages. Long ago driven from their homelands, Silent Striders are often viewed as little more than homeless vagabonds who travel seemingly at random across the world, but always manage to turn up where trouble is brewing. As well as an in-depth look at the history of the tribe and its expulsion from Egypt, typical Silent Strider attitudes and the current status of the tribe, the *Silent Striders Tribebook* also promises to offer many adventure ideas and hints on roleplaying these lonely wanderers and their fight against the evil of the Wyrm.

Also due from White Wolf soon is the third part of the *Immortal Eyes* trilogy for *Changeling: The Dreaming*, and the second edition of the *World of Darkness* sourcebook.

Look out for reviews of all these books in our next issue, out on Friday 1st November.

COMING SOON

And besides...



Bugs on video

No, not the awful BBC 'techno-thriller' but *Insektors*, the animated series first shown on Channel 4 earlier this year.

Insektors is a bizarre comedy set on the Black Planet, where all the inhabitants are intelligent (or not so intelligent) insects and bugs of all varieties. The series tells the tale of the ceaseless struggle between the Verigreens who live in the rather pleasant Flower City and the nasty Kruds. With characters including the heroic Flynn, evil Queen Catheter and her chief advisor Draffsack, *Insektors* is every bit as strange as its cast list sounds. But it's also really quite funny.

Channel 4 has just released the first series of the show on two videos, priced £9.99 each, and a new series is due to start this autumn. If you're feeling a bit jaded, they're definitely worth checking out.

Fancy being a game designer?

New British games company Colonial Miniatures is currently in the process of designing and writing a skirmish wargame to support its recently released line of science fiction miniatures (see **arcane** 11). As such, the company is looking for people to assist in the writing and development of the system. It's also interested in seeing any ideas for other games to publish. Budding games designers should drop a line to: Colonial Games, 44 Dovehouse Mead, Barking, Essex

Quest for the deluxe edition?

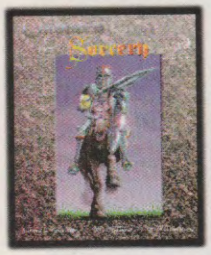
Stone Ring Games, publisher of the *Quest for the Grail* collectable card game (**arcane** 1), is putting the finishing touches to a gift-boxed edition of the game. Presented in a book-sized box, the set includes two pre-designed decks plus an expanded version of the rules and all the counters and dice required to play.

Quest for the Grail was one of the games recently on display in the British Museum's exhibit about the quest motif in literature. As you'd expect, it's about the, erm, quest for the mythical Grail of Arthurian legend. There'll be a review of the *Quest* gift-boxed edition in a future issue of **arcane**.

COMING SOON

Chivalry & Sorcery 3rd Edition

One of the most detailed fantasy roleplaying games ever produced returns.



One of the classic games of roleplaying's early years, at the time of its release *Chivalry & Sorcery* was one of the most intricate and highly detailed games ever produced. Now the game is set to return in a completely new 3rd edition from Highlander Designs.

Promising a streamlined design that doesn't sacrifice the realism of the original game, a completely new skill system, points-based or random character generation and a rich magic system, the new edition has been designed to support both fantasy and historical styles of play.

Also in production is a *Game Master's Handbook* for the new edition, featuring two complete campaign settings as well as advice and additional rules for *Chivalry & Sorcery 3rd Edition*. Look out for a full review in the next issue of **arcane**.

Seymour J Clancy III's great outing

What was the real reason Damon Hill left Williams? Seymour thinks he knows...

Wahl ah nowadays expectorate long-haired bohemians and counter-cultural vaudeville ennertayners to delve into the dastardly domains of deregulated derring-do gay-ems, mah displeasure was distended to a deliterious degree when Matt Lewis divulged to mah say-elf that he had read in the *Mail on Sunday* on the 1st of September that Jacques Villeneuve from the world of 'Daredevil Drivers and Dominical Divertissements' do wear DMs for eight of his fray-ends.

Jacques says, "the games can last for a couple of days but there are no winners or losers". Ah say the loser is YOU AND AH – it is peep-holes lahk Mr Villeneuve as ah wish to expose for thay-are causing of crahm, unemployment and the decline of the traditional family unit in ower sauce-eyety. Thay are also to blame for all war, pestilence and famine, as well, nacherully. Ah call upon all roleplayers to repent and rise up against this plague of game playing and other related innocuous leisure tahm acti-McVities and to stand full square behaand Damon Hill's broad and self-assured shoulders now that the doughty dunderhead has been dropped from Robin Williams' racing car team in favour of a roleplayer. *(I think that's as much as we need to hear* – Ed.)

Seymour doesn't want to know why Matt was reading the *Mail on Sunday* – as long as his vigilantes find him leads on famous roleplayers at large, they'll get the T-shirts and there'll be no questions asked.

The Starshield Project

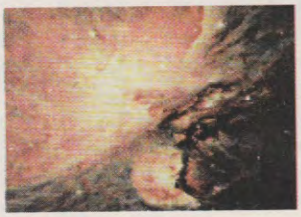
Take part in creating a new science fiction setting...

New Millennium Entertainment, publisher of the superb *Conspiracy X* roleplaying game (which was reviewed in **arcane** 7), has announced that it will be producing a new game based on the next series of science fiction novels from Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman.

Weis and Hickman will be familiar names to many gamers, being the original authors of the best-selling *Dragonlance* fiction from TSR. Since then the pair have continued to collaborate on several series of novels. With their new line of *Starshield* books, however, the pair have hit upon an interesting new twist in the 'shared world' concept.

Although the basics of the universe have been sketched out, Weis and Hickman are now offering anyone who has Internet access the chance to take part in detailing the Starshield setting.

Subscribers to the project will receive an area of space roughly ten star systems in size to flesh out in intricate detail, as well as access codes allowing them to upload their input directly to the *Starshield* World Wide Web site. This in itself is undoubtedly a unique idea, but the Starshield universe will certainly not be a static affair. By corresponding with the authors and the other subscribers, you'll be able to help determine the course of events for both your particular area of the galaxy and the setting as a whole, in a sort of freeform play-by-mail game – affecting both the events of the books and the roleplaying game.



The first book in the series, *Starshield: Sentinels*, will appear in November, with New Millennium Entertainment's roleplaying game due to be released early next year. Anyone interested in taking part in the project should check out the *Starshield* Web site at `http://www.starshield.com`

COMING SOON

Nightmare Chess

Aaron Nimzowitsch will be turning in his grave...

Steve Jackson Games has just released its version of *Nightmare Chess*. The boxed set features a deck of cards that allow a variety of 'special moves' and other effects in an otherwise normal game of chess. For example, Man of Straw can be played when your King is in check or check-mate, and enables you to swap the position of your king and a pawn, while Figure Dance moves each piece which is currently occupying a corner of the board clockwise to the next corner.

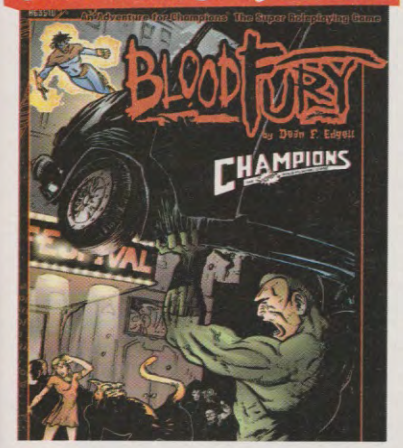
As you can probably imagine, this isn't a game aimed at serious chess players, but a way of livening up the ancient boardgame, leading to fast-moving play and radical changes in position. *Nightmare Chess* is based on a French game, *Tempete sur l'Echiquier*, which has proved very popular among chess players of all ages and persuasions. Just don't try taking your cards to a serious chess tournament...

Look out for a full review of the game in the next issue of **arcane**.

Blood Fury

When superheroes get in a fight, sometimes innocent bystanders get hurt...

COMING SOON



A brand new adventure for *Champions* or *Dark Champions* from Atlas Games, *Blood Fury* faces players with the consequences of their actions, whatever they may be.

When a woman is injured during one of their fights with the bad guys they must help search for a blood donor of the same extremely rare type. Of course, things are never quite as simple and straightforward as they initially seem, and the players will very quickly find themselves caught up in a particularly deadly plot which threatens the lives of thousands of people.

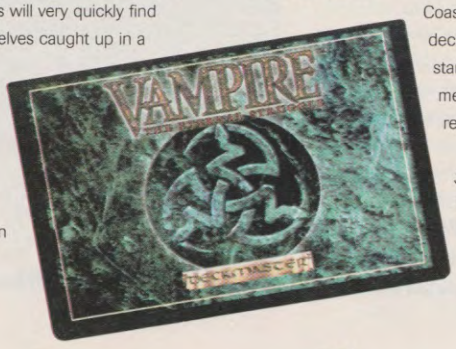
Blood Fury is a 64-page adventure, written by Dean F Edgell, who's previous credits include work on *Champions Presents #1*. We'll be bringing you a full review in **arcane** 13.

Sabbat

After a two-year wait, the first stand-alone expansion for *V:TES* is due for release.

By the end of the month *Vampire: The Eternal Struggle* players will be getting their teeth into the first stand-alone expansion, the 400-plus *Sabbat* set. The Sabbat is a malicious sect of vampires which has rejected the ancient undead laws and proclaimed a bloody war on the Kindred of Camarilla. Sabbat players can build dedicated Sabbat decks with which to pick Camarilla decks apart, recreating the war which has raged ferociously for centuries.

The set is to be released in 28-card mega-boosters, with no *Sabbat* starter decks (other stand-alone card games expansions from Wizards of the Coast have come in starter deck format as well as standard boosters). Each mega-booster should retail at around £3.



Look out for *Sabbat* at the end of October. You can call Wizards of the Coast for more information on 0345 125599.

Conventions

Lots of like-minded game players in one place.
Convention diary

5th October
Black Lotus Tournament
The Guild of Melee & Magic presents the last of the Mox A Month tournaments this year. £5 entrance. Contact **Jason** on **0181 715 8675** to book a place (pre-registration only).

17th-20th October
Internationale Spieltage – Spiel '96
The 14th International Games Day in Essen, Germany celebrates all types of gaming including fantasy, science fiction and adventure roleplaying. Call **0049 228/342273** or **342712**. But if you don't speak German, forget we mentioned it.

26th October
Nameless '96
At Victoria Hall, Station Rd, Harrow, Middx – *AD&D, Magic, Marvel Super Heroes* and more. £3.50 (£3 RPGA) Contact: ***Darrell Impey,*** 14 Sandow Cres, Hayes, Middx **0181 573 9042** or e-mail: mblade@mblade.demon.co.uk

26-28th October
Gaelcon 96
The Irish Games Association's 8th International Convention takes place at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, Dublin. Contact: **+353 1 7012359**, e-mail: droe@telecom.ie Web: http://indigo.ie/~renraku/gaelcon.html

8-10th November
Clan Amber 96
Residential convention for the diceless RPG *Amber* at the Holiday Inn Garden Court, Edinburgh. ***Nicky & Alan Cannon*** **0131 4476124**, 70/5 Craighouse Gardens, Edinburgh EH10 5UN. The Web site is at http://www.Abdn.ac.uk/~t03ndm/CAINE.html

17th November
Sandwell Skirmish 1996
Re-enactment groups of all periods, table-top wargames, roleplaying, dice and cards at West Bromwich Gala Baths from 10am-4pm. For more information contact **Tom Penn,** 1 Harnall Close, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands B90 4QR

Famous for 15 minutes

All right, already – so the film *Airheads* contains a reference to *Dungeons & Dragons*. Here at the **arcane** office we've known this since last year, but after the film's release in this country on 5th February, we've had a sackful of letters to the15 Minutes column from readers referring us to what was to be the new *This is Spinal Tap*, had it been any good. So, let's finally deal with the matter right now, once and for all.

The scene goes like this: wannabe-rocker Chaz is forced to confront his guilty past before a vast audience of his peers...

"I was a geek in high school," he admits painfully. "I had really short hair, I played *Dungeons & Dragons*, and I even had a bug collection!"

What's a bug collection? Does that mean he used to collect insects? What's so geeky about that? We know a girl who used to habitually mash up caterpillars in her pinafore till it went green.

Anyway, Chaz finds he's not alone in having played *Dungeons & Dragons*, and all wallow in self-righteous geekness. The dialogue then moves on to the subjects of mucus and masturbation, but as neither of these topics fall into the remit of this magazine, we'll tarry no longer.

The name of Tamsyn Hutchinson of Glasgow came out on top of the pile of letters referring to this subject and so she has been sent an **arcane** T-shirt. If you want one send us information concerning roleplaying, as portrayed in the media. Send your findings to:

15 Minutes, arcane, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW

Or e-mail us at:

arcane@futurenet.co.uk

And all that you have ever desired in a T-shirt could be yours, except for pockets for keeping caterpillars in.

Multi-lingual MAGIC The Gathering™

A new multi-national *Magic: The Gathering* gift box is released.

Wizards of the Coast has launched a special gift box for *Magic* collectors which contains a total of six booster packs from different language versions of the game. In each *Magic Multiverse* pack there are two boosters from the forthcoming *Visions* expansion for Mirage (due to be released in January); these are the only cards which are in English. The 25 *Visions* preview cards which are mixed into these boosters include 15 commons, six uncommon and just four rare. The other four boosters in the pack comprise one Japanese Chronicles booster, one Italian Alliances booster, one German Renaissance booster and one French Homelands booster. The box in which the new set comes can also be used as a useful card carrier with a 840-card capacity.

The *Magic Multiverse* sets should be on sale in the UK by the end of the month, though we have no price as yet. Wizards of the Coast is on 0345 125599.

Also, note that you lucky **arcane** readers can get a sneak preview of the *Visions* cards by buying a copy of issue 15, which, if all goes to plan, will carry two cards from the set.

Crunchy Frog Enterprises and Nightshift Games

Getting it together

Crunchy Frog/Nightshift Games announces partnership with Gold Rush Games.

Publisher of the *Critter Commandos*, *Critter-Tek* and *Hidden Invasion* roleplaying games, Crunchy Frog/Nightshift Games has entered into a 'strategic partnership' with Gold Rush Games, publisher of the *Heroic Adventures* game and upcoming *Usagi Yojimbo* and *Sengoku* roleplaying systems (**arcane** 10).

Rather than being a merger of the companies the alliance seems to be aimed more at the business side of things, with Gold Rush handling the distribution for Crunchy Frog and Nightshift. "This is a great deal for both of us," said Paul Lidberg, president of Crunchy Frog. "We get to hand off some of the administrative tasks that cut into our time, making it easier for us to pursue the creation of incredible games!" Mark Arsenault, president of Gold Rush, also seems happy with things, "This agreement will benefit both companies. The Crunchy Frog/Nightshift line is a proven collection of good games. We're happy to be able to do this for them."

Hopefully the deal will mean that it'll be much easier for gamers to get hold of Crunchy Frog's little-known games, which has to be good news for everyone. We'll bring you news of any new releases from either company. Watch this space...

Name: .....

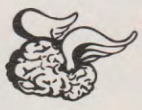
Address: .....

My favourite ten RPGs ever are:

1. .....
2. .....
3. .....
4. .....
5. .....
6. .....
7. .....
8. .....
9. .....
10. .....

Return to: The Editor, **arcane**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

We need your brain!



Help arcane compile its list of the top 50 RPGs of all time.

As we mentioned a couple of issues back, for **arcane** 14 (our extra-special Christmas edition), we're compiling a readers' list of the best 50 roleplaying games of all time. We'd like each of you to send us a list of your favourite ten RPGs, in descending order, so that we can make the eventual listing as representative of your views as possible. Don't worry if you've not played ten roleplaying games, just send us your list of as many as you have played.

Many of you have done this already, but to make it easier for those of you who haven't, we thought we'd give our art staff a headache by getting them to design a form (they hate that). Photocopies are fine, by the way. Oh, and after we've complied the list, all the entrants' names will be put in a large box and the one drawn will get HUNDREDS of pounds worth of roleplaying gear.

Hold on to your sanity!

Get every Investigator card for *Mythos* in one bargain pack.

Getting hold of *Mythos* (the limited version – remember, there's an unlimited version on its way soon) has managed to prove rather tricky, especially over here in the UK, because Chaosium deliberately kept the print run pretty low. As the expansion sets were released, many shops were finding that all they could get hold of was boxes of boosters and no starters, which made it difficult for newcomers to the game to get into it – the starters contained the all-important Investigator cards, one of which each player needs to participate in the game. To remedy this situation, Chaosium has now made available packs of Investigator cards which contain all eight cards from the set (with one Investigator on each side, making 16 in all) for approximately £1.99. So now anyone can play (providing you can get hold of a copy of the rulebook).

Check out your local gaming stores to see if they have them in stock, and if not, tell them to ring Hobby Games (☎ 01903 730998) or Esdevium Games (☎ 01252 26116) to order some pronto.

It'th a mythtery

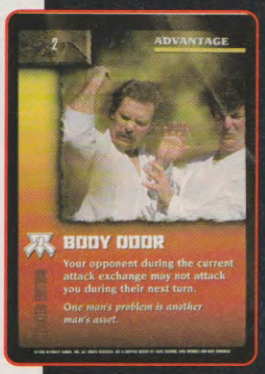
New CD-ROM from FlagTower brings the unexplained to your PC.

Agreed, it's not directly related to roleplaying, but referees of any of the modern-day horror and conspiracy games which are currently in vogue (such as *Don't Look Back*, reviewed **arcane** 5, and *Conspiracy X*, reviewed **arcane** 7) could do a great deal worse than take a long, hard look at a new CD-ROM called *The Unexplained* by multimedia house FlagTower.

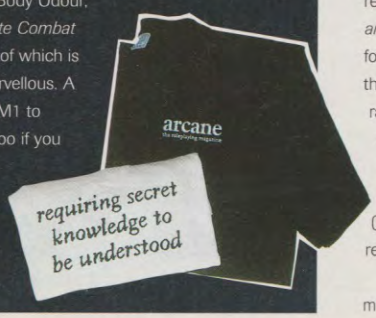
Stuffed full of perfect inspiration for downright weird adventures, this PC disc attempts to catalogue a collection of strange phenomena including UFO sightings, ghosts, crop circles, Bigfoot sightings and, ahem, falling fish. Theories and quasi-explanations offered by experts, and real-life stories from people who've been on the sharp-end of spooky goings-on, provide the flesh on the bones. It's yours for £29.99 from software stores, or contact FlagTower on ☎ 0500 486500.

CARD OF THE MONTH

Body Odour


2
ADVANTAGE
BODY ODOR
Your opponent during the current attack exchange may not attack you during their next turn.
One man's problem is another man's asset.

Thankfully the summer is now behind us (which is good news for us – to say that our office gets a tad hot is like saying that John Major is a tad indecisive), and so the nation can start breathing in queues again, no longer having to fear four air, polluted by the contents of the old man's armpit in front. However, to remind us of those would-be halcyon days when England very nearly did well at football, and an English chap very nearly did well at tennis (and the England team did dreadfully at cricket), Mark Hides (manager of the Dungeons and Starships RPG shop in Sheffield, no less) sent us this gem of a card. Body Odour, from the *Ultimate Combat* CCG, the effect of which is to stun your opponent for the next turn. Marvellous. A T-shirt will shortly be finding its way up the M1 to adorn Mark's back, and you can have one too if you come up with a card which we deem suitable as Card of the Month!



Send your offerings to **arcane**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. We'll send them back.

Come and have a go then...

...if you think you're hard enough (to take on a new skirmish game).

Gomi Designs is pushing hard into the miniatures skirmish rules arena with the release of a new system, adding to its *Ball and Chain* game, which has been available for several months. *Mecha Carnage* is, as the name would suggest, not fantasy, but rather science fiction. We've got scant details at the moment, so we'll guess a bit and suggest that it's probably a robot fighting game in a similar vein to *BattleTech* (though, er, don't hold us to that). We'll be reviewing it in the near future.

Also from Gomi comes a new range of miniatures, its Abduction range which consists of nine figures. With names such as: Alien, standing; Alien with power globe; Alien Examiner with 'medical probe'; and Dead Alien, I guess you can figure out (sorry) what the theme of the new miniatures set is.

Make the Internet make you money!

the Internet magazine .net presents

The Internet Bible
A book you can believe in.

Get the plain facts in plain English with this pocket-sized guide to the Internet. Choose your modem - Select a service provider - E-mail - Newsgroups - The WorldWide Web - it's all in here.

Price £5.49 inc P&P **Order code:** FLB 1655

Business on the Internet

Find out exactly what the Internet can do for your business and at what cost. Whether you want to find out how to promote your business on the Net or how to start to build your own Web site, you'll find clear professional advice in this book. Within its pages you'll find clear cut advice on:

- Whether or not to set up your own in-house server
- Using the Net for PR
- How to design your Web site
- How to effectively promote your Website
- Find out where the Internet is heading.

Get started, define your goals and build your strategy to make the most of the Internet.
Price £19.95 **Order code:** FLB 1000

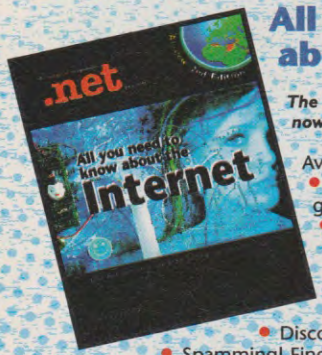
Create great Web pages

Learn the art of HTML programming with this new book from those talented guys on .net magazine and FutureNet.

Within its 190 pages, you'll find practical guidance on how to:
- Create Web pages with ease
- Design forms for user feedback
- Set up links to other WWW pages
- Master GIFs, JPEGs and imagemaps
- The secrets of Netscape extentions
- Go into business on the Net
- Explore the future with Netscape Plug-ins!

If you're serious about getting the most out of your Web pages then you need the professional advice in this book.
Price: £19.95 **Order code:** FLB0896

All you need to know about the Internet



The 2nd edition of this crucial Internet guide is now available . . .

Avoid all the hype -
- Find out what you really need to know to get on-line.
- Choose the right Service provider
- Surf the Net at Internet Cafés
- Talk to the World with E-mail, Newsgroups and mailing lists
- Create your own Web pages with HTML
- Discover the top 50 "must-see" Web sites
- Spamming! Find out what the jargon means

Brought to you by the UK's best and best-selling Internet magazine -.net.
Price £14.99 **Order code:** FLB 0772

Order NOW on 01225 822511

Access VISA

A chill is in the air

A new beginning is planned for Mayfair Games' classic RPG.

This is your source for the most up-to-date information about Mayfair's products, as well as card list on-line puzzles, contests, and a complete catalog. We will be constantly updating this web page, so pl email us your comments!

Check out Contests where You Could Win Chill® products or have your story published on the web site or in an upcoming Chill® sourcebook!

Log on to the Mayfair Games World Wide Web site to find out more about the new *Chill* line.

When *Chill* was launched way back in the mid 1980s as a direct competitor to Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu*, it received mixed reviews. However, it quickly managed to establish itself as one of the classic systems of the day and picked up a sizeable following. It is a shame, then, that since the turn of the decade Mayfair Games has largely ignored its horror RPG, and it's good to hear that now, following the financial success of its *SimCity* CCG, the company has decided to renew efforts to produce *Chill* material.

To kick off with, Mayfair is releasing a new sourcebook for the game, aimed at SAVE agents worldwide to help them in their efforts to defeat the evil machinations of the Unknown. No price has been announced as yet – hell, there's not even a title – but you should be able to discover more by monitoring the new *Chill* World Wide Web site at: `http://www.coolgames.com/save/index.html`

We will bring you more information on how the new *Chill* line is developing, together with reviews of all the new *Chill* products, the moment we manage to decipher Mayfair Games' press releases and order ourselves the new books.

Dark Future Fun

arcane COMPO

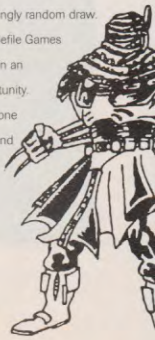
Leystorm: The Dominion (**arcane** 11) is the first roleplaying game from new British games company, Rolefile Games. Set in a darkly mystical future in which players must fight against the evil and corruption that has spread throughout the Dominion, it features fast-paced, simple rules with the emphasis on action and adventure over tables and charts. To celebrate the game's release, the jolly nice chaps at Rolefile have given us two copies of the rulebook to give away to you, our readers, completely free!

Well, almost. In order to become the proud owner of one of these two *Leystorm* rulebooks, you have to answer the following question correctly:

Q Ley lines are supposed to be mystical 'rivers' of energy that run across the land. Which famous monument in the south-west of England is alleged to stand on the site of a meeting of powerful ley lines?

Send your answers on a postcard marked 'There's mystical energy in them thar hills!' to **arcane**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW, or e-mail them to `arcane@futurenet.co.uk` obeying the following simple rules:

1. Closing date for entries is Friday 15th November, 1996.
2. Winners will be decided by a frighteningly random draw.
3. Employees of Future Publishing or Rolefile Games caught trying to enter will be sacrificed in an ancient Druidic rite at the earliest opportunity.
4. Likewise, anyone sending more than one entry will be forced to wear a very silly and rather embarrassing white robe for the rest of their natural life.
5. The editor's decision is, while not always enlightened, always final.



Fanzine update

Three fanzines in the office this month, and they look like this...

Fanzines, as we all know, form a vital part of the roleplaying market, so it's good to see three of the blighters being sent into **arcane** this month. First off, and very professional-looking it is too, is the second issue of *Tomb: Midnight Feast* which is aimed squarely at players of *Vampire* (both the roleplaying game from White Wolf and the collectable card game from Wizards of the Coast). It's a worthy read, packed full of articles and a fair bit of advertising. This issue costs £2.50 in the UK (£3.50 in the US, £4 anywhere else in the world) and is available from a variety of distributors (Hobbygames, Esdevium Games, Chris Harvery Games, Gargoyle Games and Diamond Distributors).

A new kid on the fanzine block is *Visions* from editors David and John House. It concentrates on all manner of gaming, though it's primarily a RPG fanzine, touching also on film, TV and fiction. The first issue, which is A4 in size, is a *Star Wars* special, and pretty darn good it is too. Get it for all of a quid from *Visions*, 8 Eythrope Road, Stone, Aylesbury, HP17 8PG. And be jolly quick about it – it's sure to sell out fast.

Finally, and on a somewhat different tack, is *PBMzine* – a fanzine which is entirely dedicated to coverage of play-by-mail games. Issue five reviews *Overlord, Middle-earth 2950, Corporation* and a whole host of other new PBMs. It also contains news, reader contact information and debate about a variety of the popular postal games. Get it for £1.75 from Jamie Lang, 53 Scott Road, Sheffield S4 7BG. Or, if you're comparitively rich, grab yourself a year's subscription for just £6 (UK, £10 in Europe, $16 in the USA and $25 in Aussie bucks in you live Down Under). You can e-mail Jamie on: jamie@globalnet.co.uk

visions
1
Issue 1 . August/September 1996 . £1 . STAR WARS SPECIAL
Read the past, present and future of the most successful sci-fi trilogy...EVER!

Calling all fanzine editors! **arcane** is more than willing to give your fanzine a read and a mention in the Despatches section of the mag. We don't mind if you're a new fanzine, or one that's been going for ages – we'll happily give you some coverage and help you to sell more issues. Send a copy of your latest issue to: Fanzine reviews, **arcane**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

next month in arcane

TAKE THE PLUNGE

Isn't it about time you gave your referee a rest and started running some of your own games? Next month's cover feature tells you all you need to know about becoming a referee and guaranteeing your players have a great time!

SWEET DREAMS ARE MADE OF...

Many games use dream sequences and memory alterations, but how on earth do you go about roleplaying these most tricky of situations? **arcane** lifts the veil in issue 13.

i was a live-action virgin

We've finally succumbed. Next month, we report from The Gathering, the largest live-action roleplaying event in the country.

Plus, many more features, the latest gaming news, reviews of every new gaming release and a heap of other great stuff.

arcane 13 (gulp!) will be on sale Friday 1st November

To make sure of your copy of arcane every month either subscribe using the card in this issue or fill in this handy form and give it to your newsagent.
Dear newsagent, please reserve a lovely copy of arcane for me every month.

Name .....

Address .....

Postcode ..... Telephone .....

OKAY, BOYS, LET'S GO OVER DIS AGAIN. WHEN THE BIG GUY INNA RED SUIT SHOWS UP, JIMMY VIOLIN HUSTLES 'IM INTO DA CORNER.
AN WE SEZ WE BEEN NICE...REAL NICE...THEN WE DEMAND THE GOODS. YEAH.
NOIR... SHADES OF NOIR...FACES IN THE CROWD AND ALL THE REST. HE DON'T GIVE 'EM UP, WE PLUG 'IM. AND THE LITTLE REINDEER, TOO.
LUCKY
·TANG·

Like nothing else.

noir

Visit our web page (www.archongaming.com) for more details about the most dangerous and exciting game to come out of the big city. Great art, great stories, great characters...great giveaways, too, from **Archon Gaming Inc.** Write to Archon at 0 Headwater Cove, Barrington, IL 60010, or Archongame@aol.com

COLUMN

The End of the World is Nigh

Roleplaying games are entering a difficult time of crisis. Yet again.

Andrew Rilstone

Andrew is the editor of *Interactive Fantasy*, the journal of roleplaying and story-making systems, and is also a regular contributor to arcane.

TREACHEROUS INFILTRATORS are threatening to destroy the ideological purity of our movement. They are taking over our conventions and peddling their filth in our shops. Young, impressionable, vulnerable people who would in the normal course of events have become enthusiastic, imagination-stretching roleplayers are instead being taken away by these people, tempted to play collectable card games.

This is undoubtedly an extremely serious matter. If large numbers of people start to play collectable card games then the capitalist dogs who supply our industry will wickedly start manufacturing them, for the spineless reason that this will turn a profit and keep them in business. There is, therefore, a real and daunting risk that roleplaying games may disappear from the face of the Earth.

It is so very, very insidious. Card games, like RPGs, are covered in cool fantasy artwork. They appeal to the same types of people who like RPGs: fans of fantasy books, people who want to pretend to be wizards, werewolves and wielders of the One Ring. Indeed, there is so much overlap between potential roleplayers and potential card players that some treasonous magazines actually dare to cover both subjects at the same time.

But, of course, roleplaying games are not the same as card games at all. They take commitment and dedication to play. Instead of going through the time-consuming task of designing a character, writing a scenario and studying long, complicated, badly-written rule-books – dammit, it never did *me* any harm – a card gamer can pick up an enticing 'starter deck' and start playing almost immediately. If they can find fun and fantasy so easily there is a real danger that people will never start playing RPGs in the first place. Some of them may not even know that such things exist.

The vile heretics have also started to contaminate the rest of the hobby. Roleplaying games such as *Everway* and *Dragonlance 5th Age* contain packets of the evil cards. Some fellow travellers have said that this is a way of diverting card gamers back to the One True Path. But I know better than to believe that – it is a dangerous, capitalist plot to get us hooked on card collecting. (How can any of us remain unsullied when even games such as *Changeling* demand that we buy booster packs in order to use the magic system?)

We have been through this before, comrades! Many years ago, Games Workshop was simply a chain of retailers. But it was corrupted. It signed a pact with a huge spiky demon who lives in the sewers of Nottingham. Games Workshop then declared itself independent of the roleplaying industry and started to talk (ha!) about The Games Workshop Hobby. It produced big, boxed, colourful fantasy games which were very easy to learn and lots of fun to play. Some of them (wimps!) even had clearly written rules to boot. Millions of children were led astray by this development. According to some accounts, there are now more Space Marines in this country than actual human beings. It looked like the end of the roleplaying hobby as we knew it.

"This time I am right. Card games represent the end of roleplaying as we know it."

Some of you may even remember a time when Puffin published story books which went from beginning to end in a straightforward sequence. But then someone uttered the magical words 'Jackson and Livingstone', and the aberration which is *Fighting Fantasy* appeared in a puff of sulphurous smoke. We all feared then that the writing was on the wall for RPGs. (The writing said, "To attack the venomous hedgehog, go to paragraph 256; to use your vial of vanilla essence, go to paragraph 312.") Clearly, these books, in which *you* became the hero and *you* made the decisions, would appeal to the same people who might otherwise have liked roleplaying games. Clearly they were easier and more accessible. And, equally clearly, they were not true roleplaying games. However, children bought them in droves. They even found their way into the best-seller list – the end of our favourite hobby seemed nigh.

Comrades, we must unite and resist these increasingly prevalent incursions at all costs! I warned you that Games Workshop was certainly going to bring about the downfall of our precious hobby. I said the same thing about *Fighting Fantasy*. I also claimed something similar about live action roleplaying, computer adventure games, on-line multi-user Dungeons, the *Dungeons and Dragons* cartoon series and official bendy figures.

Each time it turned out that I was wrong. Roleplaying somehow managed to survive these unwelcome encroachments pretty much unharmed. Some lying, running-dog capitalist quisling scum is sure to insist that this demonstrates just how resilient roleplaying games actually are, that the people who want to play them will always carry on playing them, and that the people who don't will just play something else instead. Brothers and sisters, do not listen to such defeatist claptrap. This time I am definitely right. Card games represent the end of roleplaying as we know it. We must resist. To the barricades!

IRON MAIDEN

SINGLE CD FEATURING 16 Top 20 Hits Including 9 Top 10's 5 Top 5's & 1 No. 1

Best Of The Beast

OUT NOW

16 CLASSIC TRACKS

Including

Can I Play With Madness
Fear Of The Dark
Run To The Hills
The Number Of The Beast
The Trooper · Man On The Edge
Bring Your Daughter...
To The Slaughter

THE VERY BEST OF BRITAIN'S PREMIER HEAVY ROCK BAND

Maiden: Internet - http://www.maiden.co.uk/maiden
e-mail - maiden@pncl.co.uk

EMI

this planet earth ltd

A GLOBAL REVOLUTION

the DALEK is here

Actual photograph of the Daleks produced by 'this planet earth ltd'

Following the massive success of the Dalek competition held with SFX late '95, 'this planet earth' announce that full size Dalek production is fully operational and orders are now being taken. The full size reproduction prop is taken from mouldings obtained from BBC Visual Effects and presents for purchase a replica that is as close to the actual TV Daleks as possible. This is the first time that the full size Dalek has been available fully licensed by BBC Worldwide. This is a landmark in the History of Doctor Who and 'this planet earth' are proud to be part of it.

The Dalek is manufactured mainly in fibreglass and weighs a substantial 40kg. Each Dalek comes with a serial number plate and certificate of authenticity.

The Dalek can be purchased in two colour schemes, grey and black Renegade and also black and silver Supreme.

Pricing: Grey / Black Renegade £1495 + £58.75 p&p
Black / Silver Supreme £1595 + £58.75 p&p
(all prices include VAT) payment options are available
For an order form and details without obligation

Write to: Ian Clarke, this planet earth ltd,
PO Box 521, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent,
Staffs ST7 3TT

DOCTOR WHO

Where will you go when the sofa becomes too small to hide behind?

Doctor Who and the Doctor Who diamond logo © BBC 1973. The Daleks device mark © BBC / Terry Nation 1963. Licensed by BBC Worldwide Ltd

COLUMN

On The Soapbox

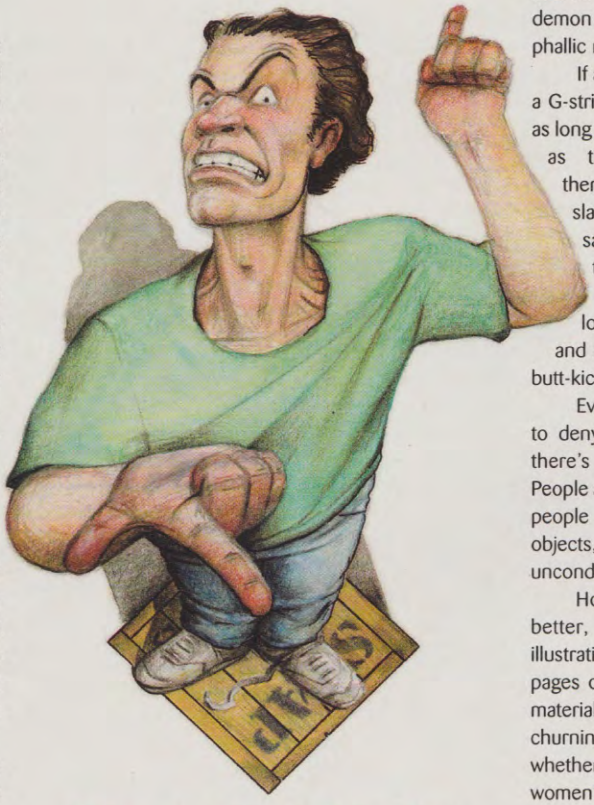
Lynne Wilson's comments last month on the portrayal of women in fantasy art had at least one feminist reader ripping her hair out in disbelief. Step up Mia Hart-Allison from Billingham.

I AM A YOUNG, FEMALE roleplayer with about five years' gaming experience and have heard the arguments about the depiction of women in fantasy art many times before, but never so crassly and embarrassingly put as by Lynne Wilson in her 'On the Soapbox' column in last month's **arcane**. Now, I *do* consider myself a feminist, and when Lynne comments, "I don't consider myself a feminist, more of an equal opportunities person," I would refer her to a dictionary where she would learn that the definition of feminism is, "a doctrine or movement that advocates equal rights for women". Apart from this paradoxical comment, the views expressed in her article were about as informing as an episode of *Neighbours*.

Lynne discussed the depiction of females in art, using the tired, old cliché of "blond chainmail bikini babes" and criticising, in particular, Larry Elmore. At first she seemed to be forming a lucid argument, laying down evidence to judge before saying why she thought the situation was totally wrong, and what she thought should be done about it. However, in the end, all she was saying amounted to, 'look, it's wrong, don't do it'.

I agree with Lynne that some of the paintings in fantasy art are truly sexist, but we're all grown-ups, aren't we? Nobody actually believes that normal women are built like that, do they? If they do, they're obviously so far gone over the precipice of small-minded ignorance and bigotry, that a half-informed rant by a women who's so repressed she's terrified of admitting to being a feminist isn't going to change their minds.

Don't think I'm advocating this aspect of fantasy art because I'm not, though I personally find it more laughable than offensive. The real point, the point which Lynne has utterly missed in her column, isn't the clothes at all, it's the attitudes portrayed. It's always the woman cowering behind the man, while he courageously defends her against 20 orcs. It's always the woman lying on the altar with her breasts exposed and her throat cut, while the demon advances towards her with a grossly phallic magical staff.



"The real point is the attitudes. It's always the woman cowering behind the man, while he defends her against 20 orcs."

If all women in fantasy art wore nothing but a G-string, most real feminists would be happy, as long as the characters depicted were as active as their male counterparts, defending themselves and not being a mere victim or a slave. And men should be portrayed in the same way. Go ahead, fight the marauding troll hoards dressed only in your fur posing-pouch if you want to lads, just as long as you take your girlfriend with you and make sure she gets her fair share of the butt-kicking action.

Everyone, no matter how much they care to deny it, lusts after the body beautiful and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. People are sexual, so let's have sexy portrayals of people in fantasy art, but not quivering sex objects, ready and willing to obey every whim unconditionally. Let's all be equal.

Hopefully things are gradually getting better, though a few more articles and illustrations by women wouldn't go amiss in the pages of **arcane**. But when I see the same old material that certain popular companies are still churning out (they know who they are), I wonder whether, when it comes to roleplaying, the women's movement was just something that happened to other people.

And one last thing, girls. If you are going to have a go about sexism in fantasy roleplaying art, and I strongly suggest that you do, have a good, solid argument to back up what you're saying – brain-free rantings will just make the male chauvinists believe that they were right all along. Oh, and yes, Lynne, I do think the girls at the Durham LRP were pulling your leg. Big time. Get it together, girl.

ON THE SOAPBOX is your page – it's where we give you the opportunity to get something off your chest (as long as it's to do with the gaming industry, of course). The views expressed by you on this page aren't necessarily the views of arcane, or of the arcane editorial team. If you'd like to have your say, send in a piece of around 700 words long to: On the Soapbox, arcane, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or e-mail it to: arcane@futurenet.co.uk.

Tap This.

This turn, the field belongs to the BATTLETECH® trading card game.
Overwhelming firepower. Superior combat tactics.
All TCGs answer to the 'Mech this November.

Wizards OF THE COAST

FASA CORPORATION

60-card starter decks: £6.75 / 15-card booster packs: £2.25
For details of a retailer near you call our Customer Service Hotline!
0345 125599 (UK), +44 141 226 5205 9.00am - 6.00pm, Monday to Friday.
Wizards of the Coast UK Ltd. P.O. Box 1562, Glasgow G2 8BW http://wotc.ukonline.co.uk

©1996 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.BattleTech® and 'Mech are registered trademarks of FASA Corporation. The BattleTech® universe is owned by FASA Corporation and used under license. Wizards of the Coast is a registered trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

PLAY-BY-MAIL

Star struck

With the 30th anniversary of *Star Trek* still fresh in the minds of Trekkies everywhere, this month Matthew Green takes an in-depth look at a science fiction game that will boldly take you where no game has gone before.

WELCOME, ONCE AGAIN, TO **arcane**'s regular update on play-by-mail, the roleplaying fraternity anyone can take advantage of for the price of a stamp. Okay, so the postal service might be in dispute, but persevere and all kinds of fantastic games await your attention. Each month we focus on one such game, as well as bringing you tips, news and advice on the PBM scene.

This month we engage with *Starglobe+*, a sci-fi affair in which you're sent to explore the galaxy. There's also news of a *Warhammer* PBM, plus I spill the beans on my initial forays into KJC Games' *Beyond the Stellar Empire.*

STARGLOBE+

Time Patterns, free rulebook and initial start-up, turns £2.70 (inc. pre-paid reply envelope)

Starglobe was first launched way back in 1983 and consequently now has a considerable amount of research and development behind it. The current version offers you one of the most realistic space environments of any sci-fi game available, based on Einsteinian laws and advanced principles of physics. You don't need to be an expert mathematician to play this game, though – 3D map projections of surrounding stars are supplied free with every turn, and your on-board ship's computer is intelligent enough for you to just sit back and dramatically say 'engage' any time you pick a new destination. Sure enough, you'll be on your way as easily as that. A word of warning, though: the ship's computer can behave quite oddly under certain circumstances, so take good care of it. Computer Mode is probably best set at 'supportive' for at least the first couple of turns.

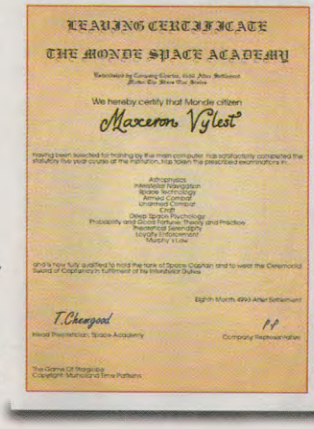
Especially good news for this game is the recent 'opening' of another quadrant, or cluster. New players will start in this quadrant, which has so far had very little exploration (you might like to take your ship on a five-year mission to check it out). The old core quadrant is filled with more experienced players, many of whom have organised themselves into powerful fleets and factions. There are more than a few hot shots around that you might do well to avoid meeting, but if you're a sucker for punishment, or have excellent diplomacy skills, you'll either need to build an ark ship, or find some kind of stable worm hole to jump between clusters.

Every player starts *Starglobe+* as a captain, having recently passed out of the Monde Space Academy, and each is charged to go out and explore the galaxy. You'll have a brand new government starship, a crew of 100 and the opportunity for some damn fine adventures.

This is an excellent game with a fair amount of human moderation. It is not solely run by a computer program, so the opportunity for roleplaying (and doing whatever the heck you like) is substantially increased.

arcane *readers can take advantage of a free rulebook and start-up offer by sending a request to Time Patterns before the end of November 1996 (the normal cost for this is £5.00). Write to:*

Time Patterns,
14 The Hollows,
Exmouth, EX8 2YZ.


LEAVING CERTIFICATE

THE MONDE SPACE ACADEMY

We hereby certify that Monde citizen

Maxeron Vylest

Every *Starglobe* + player gets a certificate to prove who he or she says they are. Sad, true, that's that PBM for you!

PBM news

Games Workshop and KJC Games have signed contracts to begin joint development of a major new PBM product based on GW's popular *Warhammer* series. It is expected to be a high-quality production with plenty of artwork, possibly being distributed directly from Games Workshop stores. It's a huge project though, with an expected release date of September 1997.

This is likely to be an awesome new challenge for *Warhammer* veterans. We'll bring you further news as it breaks.

Matthew's Journal

Let the Gods be merciful as I tell you of my initial adventures in KJC Games' *Beyond the Stellar Empire.* My captain is called Slynn and his ship is The Asimov.

The Asimov lands at the Rubis colony of system #146. We are 30,000 stellars in debt and the crew is addicted to visiting the 'Girls, Girls, Girls' show at the seedy Follies de Radiation nightclub. I'll have to get the ship underway – it's a bit of a wreck, and the crew of 18 is perhaps not big enough to take over the universe. I'll report again when things look better...

The Journals included in this column offer tasters of various games, and demonstrate the potential of PBM. More info on this month's Journal game can be obtained from: KJC Games, FREEPOST, Thornton Cleveleys, Lancs, FY5 3BR.

Drop us a line

If you have any PBM-orientated questions or comments please drop us a line at arcane, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. We are particularly interested to hear from any players who have recently won games, or those of you who have cunning tips to share with other arcane readers. You never know, if you're lucky you might even manage to win yourself one of those coveted arcane T-shirts.

DragonLance®

Fifth Age™

Dramatic Adventure Game

Now more than ever, the world needs Heroes

A Fifth Age is upon Krynn—an age with new adversaries and new challenges. Many of your favorite heroes remain, but new heroes must rise from the ranks of common men to defeat the great red Malystryx and the other Great Dragon Overlords. The changes that plague Ansalon have spilled into all aspects of life—and even the rules have changed.

The new DRAGONLANCE®: FIFTH AGE™ Dramatic Adventure Game is not AD&D® or a collectible card game. It's an entirely new narrative role-playing system, specifically created to support the epic scope and adventurous drama of DRAGONLANCE.

The versatile SAGA™ Rules System eliminates the randomness of dice. It utilizes a Fate Deck to give you more power over the game than ever before: When your hero attempts to slay a monster threatening the party, you choose which card to play. If your card is powerful enough, your hero succeeds! And magic, time, and movement are dealt with in freeform systems to emphasize action and keep the plot moving. The SAGA Rules System puts your hero's fate in your hands. Guard it well.

Ages come, Ages go. And with each comes new challenges. The Fourth Age ends with Krynn's history at a blank page. It is your Destiny to fill it.

DRAGONLANCE®: FIFTH AGE™
Dramatic Adventure Game
TSR #1148
Sug. Retail $25.00; CAN $34.00;
£18.50 U.K. Incl. VAT
ISBN 0-7869-0535-2

TSR Ltd.
120 Church End • Cherry Hinton • Cambridge, England CB1 3LB • Tel 44-1223-212517 • Fax 44-1223-248066

® and ™ designate trademarks owned by TSR, Inc. ©1996 TSR, Inc. All rights reserved.

RETRO

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness

Designed by Erick Wujcik Published by Palladium Books £7.95 First published in 1985

Want to play an eight-foot hamster with a fixation for AK47s? Then *TMNT* is your game. Paul Pettengale harks back to a time before the movie was released.

You can still get the original *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* comics in good comic stores. Also, Titan books released collections of them around the time of the release of the film – look out for them in good book stores.

1988 AND THE HYPE begins. *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles* (note the Hero rather than the Ninja) toys are what every young kiddy wants for Christmas. The TV show's on Saturday morning TV. The film is on its way. And self-respecting roleplayers are hanging their heads in shame.

Three years earlier, those in the know had picked up a copy of one of the most odd-ball RPGs anyone had seen since the release of *Paranoia* earlier in the same year (see the retro review in **arcane** 10). Based on a cult American comic, *TMNT&OS* had players taking on the roles of animals that had, somehow, been mutated into intelligent beasts who had adopted superheroesque roles in society, just like the mutant turtles of the comic by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird.

The second major supplement for *TMNT&OS* was called *Road Hogs*, and was based in the *After the Bomb* setting. It had rules for driving and vehicle combat, and a few scenarios to get you going. It encouraged basing campaigns on the road – much the same as **arcane** is doing this month with our On the Road Again feature (see page 32).

The justification for this mutation was left up to the referee, though he was encouraged to set the game in a post-apocalypse campaign world (indeed the first supplement expanded this world, detailing what life was like *After the Bomb*). Nuclear fall-out affected all of the creatures throughout the world and they changed shape, adopting almost human-like proportions and intelligence. Some of them were so human-like that it could prove difficult to tell the difference.

On the other hand... When characters were rolled-up, you could choose exactly how bestial the character was to be – whether it stood upright, whether it could manipulate items with its 'hands', and, ahem, whether it could speak. If you went for a particularly bestial brute, then you could spend points on special abilities such as PSI powers. The downside, of course, was that if, say, you chose a character that could do no more than grunt a few phrases, much of your roleplaying time was spent trying to grunt in a manner which the rest of the players could understand. You can imagine how much potential this had for farcical situations. Indeed, it was an idea that was later used in the *Star Wars* RPG, where wookie characters can't speak and the players have to grunt a lot.

> **"*TMNT&OS* was one of the most fun, and funny, games I have ever played."**

Another memorable section in the game was the rules for insanity – something which was common in characters as they struggled to come to terms with what they were. All manner of mental disorders were presented, some of them quite hysterical when it came to playing them out. Take, by way of example, severe flash-backs to psychoactive experiences whenever the character is placed in stressful situations, such as combat. While in the middle of a combat situation, a character who suffers from this post-narcotic trauma may see everyone around him turn into festering monsters, and take it upon himself to blow them all away, regardless of whether, behind the hallucination, they are friend or foe.

The actual mechanics for dealing with skills and combat was nothing special – reflective of many of the dice-based systems which were popular at the time, and derivative of the *Palladium Fantasy RPG* system. Combat was resolved using 20-sided dice; it was fast and fluid, though not terribly realistic (it was often possible to be hit by a couple of rounds from a machine gun and still pick yourself up to carry on fighting). The layout of the rulebook could have been clearer (the martial arts section was together with the skills rather than the combat). Still, it was a quick and easy game to learn, and the rules for character generation were good.

Because the TV show and films reduced the *TMNT* phenomenon from cult status to mainstream, the popularity of the game rapidly diminished. Palladium continued to support it for several years, broadening the gaming worlds involved (there was, for example, a supplement called *Transdimension Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, which was time-travel based), but that magic, that strangeness, just wasn't there anymore, and so it was dropped for 'cooler' systems. Which is a shame, because together with *Paranoia*, *TMNT&OS* was one of the most fun, and funny, games I have ever played.

the power o

There's a lot more fun to be had from politics than men in grey suits would have you believe. Paul Pettengale *explains how to spice up your campaigns by introducing some political intrigue...*

political conflict...

...leads to infighting, back-stabbing, deals behind closed doors, assassinations, espionage, the creation of pacts, the breaking of them and, in extreme but all-too-frequent cases, war. If you're a campaign referee there is a plethora of possible scenario themes which arise from political situations; you can even build a whole campaign around politics (such as the presidential election – a theme which has already been capitalised on by FASA for its *Shadowrun* system).

The problem is, our experience of politics and the way political situations arise and develop is, for the most part, pretty limited. We get our information from newspapers and the TV (and often dismiss what we see and read as a bunch of lying bastards whinging about their political counterparts), or we learn it second-hand through a politically aware friend who enjoys blabbing on about the state of the nation down the pub. When we try to think of ways we can use politics within our roleplaying campaigns, whether they be fantasy, modern-day, science fiction or otherwise, most of us usually come up against a brick wall – do you really know enough about politics to start up an interesting scenario?

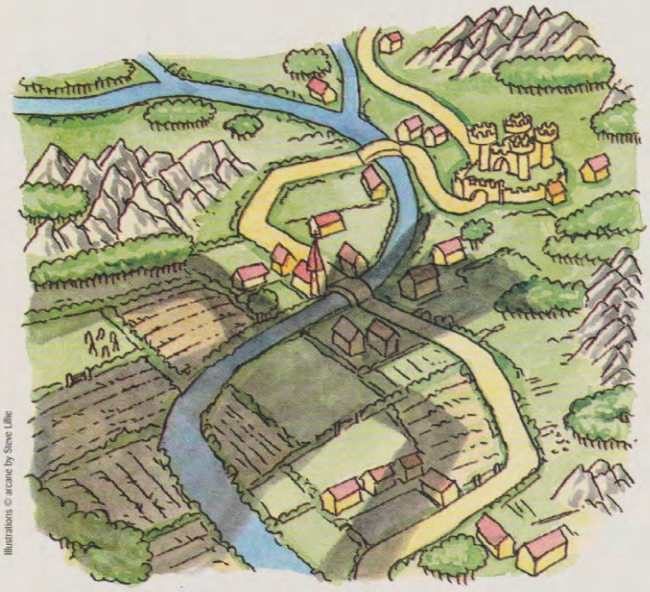
The truth is, however, that we all know far more than we realise. Politics surrounds us every day, whether it's on a national/international scale or on a more immediate scale – just as much political debate goes on within the office or classroom environment as it does in the House of Commons, it's just that it's not perceived as such. Politics is no more than a system of social interaction. On a national level political management usually involves an attempt to maintain law and order and a decent standard of living. But on the office scale, for instance, politics comes into play when someone makes the tea – how is it decided who performs this dour chore? An agreement might be made ("look, you make the tea now and then I'll make it this afternoon at four"), which may later be broken, thus causing a degree of internal conflict on the office floor.

If you want to base a scenario on some element of politics within your campaign, it's best to think small (in the first instance, at least), and to ensure that the premise for whatever political conflict or intrigue you want to use is based upon a political situation you've had first-hand experience of. There's no need to make the scenario revolve around who's going to pay the bar tab, or who's going to tell the thief that he's not allowed in the gang anymore, but instead take an everyday situation and extrapolate from it.

Use the bar tab idea, and think bigger: let's say that two villages have clubbed together to hire a party of adventurers to kill a storm giant who's been raiding the grazing grounds in between the villages for cattle to eat. Now that the deed has been done, one of the villages can't actually afford its half of the bill. So, you turn to a well-known member of the local community (a PC) to negotiate with the leaders of the other village – can a deal be struck whereby an IOU is issued, or does the first village's inability to pay result in reparations (which may lead to physical conflict)? A simple political idea can be the basis for a cracking scenario of a political bent, and you don't have to have any understanding of how party politics works to pull it off – just think of how you and your mates resolve internal conflicts and apply that theory.

This exact same scenario can be applied to any game – in a *Cyberpunk 2020* campaign the two villages could be corporations, the troll a particularly good hacker, the adventurers a hit-squad and the PC a member of a consultancy dealing in corporate relations.

On The Campaign Trail



Illustrations © arcane by Steve Lillie

covering the country to cover your back

nd the glory

Create a scandal

Of course, you may want to involve your players' characters in something which is more overtly political, such as the discovery of a local government official's corruption, or a proposed plot to rig a local election by stealing and doctoring a batch of ballot papers. In this instance, it's, usually best to look for 'back doors' through which you can introduce the PCs to the plot. The more successful politically-based scenarios are those which at first seem to be completely unrelated to the political arena.

Take the ballot paper plot by way of example. The PCs might be friends with the owner of a local printing press who's building has recently been burnt to the ground. Upon talking to the printer they learn that he recently had to turn down a contract to print a load of 'documents' for the local council, and that a long-term rival was offered the job. He'd been given proofs of the documents, but unfortunately they were in the building that was burnt down. The PCs, upon investigating the rival press, learn that the documents were in fact false ballot papers, which in turn leads them to look into the affairs of each of the local candidates for the upcoming election.

When the papers are stolen from the rival printers, things start to get just that little bit more complicated. Who's behind the arson, and the robbery? And when the winning candidate is voted in, can the party prove that he was involved in the scandal? This seemingly innocuous starting point can get the PCs involved in the local political scene efficiently and without it being forced. Of course, from here the campaign can concentrate on the PCs' attempts to infiltrate the political sphere within which the crooked politician is involved, with the ultimate aim being to expose him. And then there's the question of who the crook works for – is he part of a national scandal which the PCs will uncover, thus embroiling them in the national political system?

Getting characters involved in national politics isn't all that easy, although providing leads is, as demonstrated by the last example scenario. The problem with national-scale politics is that, depending on the political system used in the campaign world, it's incredibly difficult to penetrate. You can't simply march up to the national congress or other political 'house' and demand to see the national leader. Unless you've got some pretty serious political clout, you are more than likely to be sent away with a flea in your ear.

In the political world as much as any other, it's not what you know but who, so creating contacts with those 'in the know', or those who know those in the know, is of paramount importance for player characters

You Scratch My Back.....

making friends is the fastest way to making money

who need to scale the political ladder. This can and should form the basis for further scenarios which draw the PCs into the strange and clandestine worlds of political intrigue and back-stabbing – the closer they get to the mud, the muddier they should get. Thus, in order to gain favour with political powers they're inevitably going to have to perform suitable services, and when it comes to politicians, such favours are invariably set around the accumulation of power at someone else's expense. Of course, if the PCs are making favours with one individual who's getting them to do his dirty work, they're simply bound to find enemies along the way...

Remember, the PCs are likely to be seen as little more than commodities just waiting to be exploited by any politician who's got an ambitious streak (and haven't they all?). The politician, courtier, Prince or whatever is likely to double-cross them if he can gain from it. For instance, getting the PCs to steal a vital document from a rival, and then deliberately exposing them in the act so that he can be seen to be aiding said rival could, in some circumstances, be more beneficial than getting his hands on the document in question.

Essential viewing

What films and TV shows should you be watching? There have been dozens of films which provide suitable inspiration for politically-based scenarios, and quite a few TV shows too. We've selected some of the most useful for the referee who's after a few plot ideas...

1984, All the President's Men, Brazil, JFK, Nixon, The Day of the Jackal, The House of Cards **(BBC TV),** ***The X-Files, Yes Minister*** **(BBC TV)**

Power struggle

If you want to base a campaign around your world's political system, you could try to centre it on a major political event of some description. An election, especially if it is at a presidential level, is a good one, as is the death of a king and the ensuing power struggle, or a military coup which has been boiling for a protracted period.

The beauty of a major campaign event such as these is that there's a definite climax which the players can see coming – they know when they've got to get stuff done by in order to succeed in their goals. This creates a sense of urgency and pace throughout the campaign, which will slowly rise in pitch the closer the scenarios get to the climactic endgame.

In addition, the event can be something anticipated throughout any number of prelude scenarios. There's plenty of scope with an event of major significance to draw the campaign out, making the players only gradually aware of what they're getting themselves into. Start small, and add more and more significance to the player's actions as they approach the event in question.

Let's consider a specific example. The event which is going to rock the gaming world is a coup by an anti-religious, underground and very powerful movement. It's going to overthrow the theocratic government, kill all the priests and burn all the churches. And all this is going to happen at a set point in the campaign as decided by the referee. The players must not know this immediately, but through the use of various scenarios the referee can perhaps first make them aware that this underground group exists, then make them aware of its aims, perhaps getting the players to foil some attempted raid for finances. Bit by bit the plot should unfold and the group's true intentions become known, culminating in the attempted coup, which should be foiled by the PCs. For a great example of this sort of campaign, take a look at *The Enemy Within* campaign for *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* (see page 28).

The use of a major campaign event of a political nature can help to completely change the style of your game, presenting the PCs with fresh challenges. The most extreme event – total and all-out war – can be an interesting way to twist a campaign history (see the War Baby feature in **arcane** 5). Likewise, the aftermath of war, where political powers struggle for domination, can form the basis for a fantastic campaign (it's worth checking out old games such as *Living Steel* and *Twilight 2000* for some ideas of this nature, if you can find them).

The balance of power may have been tipped either for or against the player

characters, and so economic climates may change (wealthy PCs could suddenly find themselves having all of their loot claimed by the state for the good of all), and the PCs persecuted where before they were heroes (à la French Revolution). Scenarios can easily be created off the back of this change, whatever it may be, and an old campaign is suddenly given a new lease of life.

A new regime

More often than not, we set our games in countries which have westernised political set-ups. If we're playing fantasy games, we set our campaign where a feudal system is in operation. If we're playing modern day, we set the game in a capitalist democracy, and if it's far future, we have an extrapolated version of the latter. While this makes our lives as referees all that much easier, games can be a lot more interesting if we ensure that our political systems deviate from this somewhat predictable norm.

Alternative fantasy settings have been much discussed in Phil Master's on-going series (see **arcane** 10 and 11 and turn to page 37 in this issue), but the political situations in those alternative campaign worlds have been but hinted at. If you're thinking of using an alternative political system for the new fantasy campaign you're designing, then the best place to look is our own world's past – just about every political system imaginable has been in operation at some time, and some pretty bizarre ones still exist.

The more interesting ones, from a roleplaying point of view, are those that are strongly influenced by religion, as indeed the majority are. The pre-colonial Indian system, for example, was based on a combination of feudal principalities and religious castes. Society was broken down into horizontal strata, starting with the Untouchables at the bottom, and going up to Brahmins. Thing was, you were born into your caste, and had virtually no way of moving from one to another. However, the Hindu religion suggested that if you behaved properly throughout your life, in a manner appropriate to your caste, when you were reborn there would be a chance that you'd be born into a higher caste. This is, in essence, a brilliant way of keeping the populace in its place, even if it wasn't originally intended as such. And, of course, this caste system still exists in India today, albeit to a much lesser extent, even though the core political system in the country is democratic.

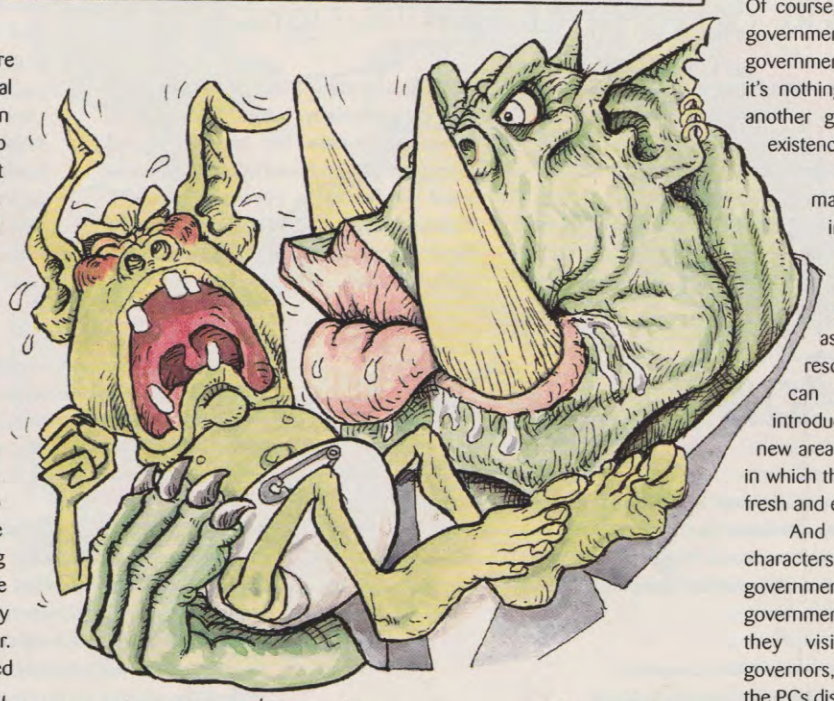
A political system for a fantasy world could easily be based on the Indian model, perhaps substituting caste for race (in terms of orcs at the bottom of the pile, then dwarves, humans and the elven princes at the top). Twisting an existing or ancient means of managing society is a pretty simple task, and ultimately far more interesting than rehashing the old feudal model. Get some appropriate books out from your local library and have some fun.

Modern day and especially futuristic games work well when the political system is that of a totalitarian regime. Those of you who have played the somewhat less-than-serious *Paranoia* should have a pretty good idea of what I'm getting at – a state which pervades all aspects of everyday life makes for some great roleplaying experiences. The idea here is of restriction – if you restrict the PCs' actions, they'll attempt to find some way of circumnavigating those boundaries, and good roleplaying is the result. Even mundane tasks such as meeting someone late at night can cause the PCs problems when there's a curfew in operation, and such simple devices shouldn't be overlooked – they add an extra dimension to the roleplaying environment.

There are plenty of real-world political regimes to turn to for inspiration, and they don't all have to be modelled on the all-too-familiar fascist or communist examples. Militaristic regimes, such as that which currently exists in Iraq, can easily be transcribed into a fantastical or futuristic setting. How do the players fit into a regime of this nature? Would they be seen as a possible threat to the military junta if they were armed to the teeth with powerful magic or a plethora of potentially lethal guns? Or would the regime attempt to recruit them to the cause as special agents of some kind? This is an interesting avenue and one that's well worth considering.

When roleplaying official characters, it's essential to get the turns of phrase right, coupled with a suitable level of condescension. Any direct question posed should be side-stepped with a clever remark, or turned around so that the question is answered with a question.

Smacking The Children



when closing lips is more effective than opening them

Foreign affairs

Of course, politics isn't all about domestic government and internal wrangling. Every government has a foreign policy too, even if it's nothing more than an agreement with another government to acknowledge the existence of borders.

Once your player characters have managed to get themselves integrated into the domestic political scene, ingratiating themselves with the ruling body, why not have that body use them as ambassadors, sent abroad to resolve some international crisis. This can be a very effective way of introducing your players to a completely new area of the campaign world – an area in which they can have new adventures in a fresh and exciting environment.

And this is even possible if the characters aren't popular in their home governmental circles. If they despise the government, someone might suggest that they visit a neighbouring country's governors, who may be interested in helping the PCs dispose of the current regime. There are all kinds of possibilities.

Introducing the PCs to another country gives you a chance to try out one of the

Don't Forget To Vote

as long as you remember to vote right!

Pitching a scenario against the political persuasions of your players is always good for a laugh. For example, if you play with a bunch of 'lefties', have their player characters get involved in a political coup against a communist government. For a somewhat comical look at judging the political views of your gaming mates, turn to page 56.

more interesting political systems, one that's likely to seem completely alien to the players if all they're used to is the typical medieval feudal system. If they're sent to negotiate with the government of this neighbouring country, then they should have to adopt a completely different approach to the one they're used to at home, thus forcing them to roleplay well. This is particularly suited to high-level campaigns, where the characters and indeed the players have become somewhat jaded by relentless adventuring in the traditional sense. The *AD&D Birthright* and *Pendragon* systems lend themselves to this type of play too.

One of the problems with getting characters involved in political situations in your campaign world is a lack of knowledge on the PCs' behalfs. How are they supposed to know about how the country is run? Can it be assumed that they've got a broad idea of political management? And where did they get their information from?

As in the real world, your characters should get the huge majority of their political understanding from whatever counts as the media of their time. In a fantasy game, for example, it's unlikely that there'll be anything like a media other than town notices pinned to trees and the gossip of the locals over a pint in the pub. This can cause all manner of problems for the referee in terms of the political education of the player characters. You can't simply tell them the score, because that would be entirely unrealistic.

Spread the word

In this instance, the PCs should learn first-hand – government officials may arrive in their base village one day, reminding everyone who pulls the strings in the land, and issuing diktats on taxes, tithes and the like. And, if it's a political power game you want for your players, you're going to have to get them into the scene slowly, piece by piece, scenario by scenario.

In modern day and futuristic settings, where a number of media types should be established, educating characters is slightly easier. The streets could be full of TVs filled with the face of Big Brother bawling out the well-meaning of the state. Street-based newspaper salesmen scream the day's

Power games

There are a number of campaign designers out there who have already effectively implemented political issues into their published scenarios. If you are looking for a good place to start with an overtly political campaign, you might like to try either of these for size:

● The Enemy Within Campaign
For: *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*
Consisting of: *The Enemy Within, Shadows Over Bogenhaffen, Death on the Reik* and *The Power Behind the Throne*
Summary: The PCs slowly become aware that there's a chaos cult out to subvert local political affairs. The campaign gradually embroils them in a complex web of political intrigue, ending up with a threat to the entire Empire which they can help to thwart. This is quite possibly the best campaign which has ever been seen in print for any game.

● The 2057 UCAS Election Campaign
For: *Shadowrun 2nd Edition*
Consisting of: *Super Tuesday, Shadows of the Underworld, Portfolio of a Dragon: Dunkelzahn's Secrets*
Summary: Rather than a full campaign, these three books look at the impact that the presidential elections of 2057 have on the lives of the players, as the various parties and factions fight for votes. *Dunkelzahn's Secrets* (which is reviewed on page 72) deals with the aftermath of the Dragon's election and assassination, events which change the entire gameworld.

headlines at PCs as they pass by... There are a number of ways that the referee can use the media to get the message across, without having to wait for the day when a PC decides that he or she is going to make the deliberate effort of buying a paper to check up on the current political scene.

The media, as we all know, doesn't necessarily tell its audience the truth, and the referee should use this to confuse the characters, throwing them off balance when they finally meet the cruel politician (as the media portrays him as being) only to find that he is in fact a pretty decent, affable fellow. Or is he?

Perhaps the government censors the media. This is extremely likely in any totalitarian state, although there are perhaps underground, illegal newspapers or TV/radio stations which publish anti-establishment propaganda. These can be used to fuel interesting rumours, spread malicious gossip and generally make the party of adventurers as sceptical as possible about the authority of the state.

Inducing fear in the player characters can also be a good thing when playing scenarios and campaigns which are based around political intrigue. Let's face it, politicians are a pretty paranoid bunch below the calm exterior, and it's almost inevitable that the people who become directly involved with politicians are going to constantly be looking over their shoulders too.

Conspiracy theories are the core concepts promoted in games such as *Conspiracy X* and *Don't Look Back* (reviewed in issues 5 and 7 respectively), but that doesn't mean you can't use conspiracy theories in other types of games, no matter what the background is.

The players should always be guessing about who they can trust, whether letters which they send or receive have been intercepted by someone they're none too friendly with, and the actual motives of the seemingly innocent 'no-bodies' who just happen to be hanging around important officials whenever they meet to discuss important matters. Think about the guy with the cigarette in *The X-Files* for inspiration, and watch the show in general to get a good feel of how conspiracy theories can be sewn into the minds of the players.

The art of running a campaign based on paranoia and mistrust is simply to never give too much information to the player characters. In fact, give them less than they actually need, or give them entirely false information and let them jump to incorrect conclusions (and thus get themselves in deep trouble). Remember, you all want to have fun whatever type of game you're playing, so there's no point in frustrating the players – they should feel as if they're getting somewhere during each gaming session, so have friendly NPCs direct them back on track when need be, or see to it that they have the occasional and much-needed lucky break. If you're playing a game where the players are slowly having to piece clues together to get at 'the truth', at least ensure that they get the clues in the first instance. Never expect that the characters are just going to be in the right place at the right time to pick up the next piece in the puzzle – see to it personally that they are.

If you're really serious about learning about political systems, and the way that politics works in modern-day society, then there are dozens of text books (mostly aimed at degree students) which you should check out. Just ask your local librarian.

The Power And The Glory

The way ahead

As I hope to have demonstrated, there's a lot more to getting your characters involved in political scenarios than you may have previously thought. From small-scale diplomacy on behalf of a local businessman who's in trouble, to international political intrigue, the scope for politically-based games is immense, and it certainly makes a big change from running around dungeons bashing stuff. Inspiration for political scenarios is all around you – you can find plenty of ideas just by watching the news, reading the paper, or by taking notice of the political situations which crop up in your work and social environments. Simply take on board what you see and hear, and think of interesting or unusual ways that you can bend these situations to the games you play.

The lead feature in **arcane** 13 poses the question: isn't it about time you stopped being a player and gave this refereeing lark a try? Yes, we're presenting you with the definitive guide to becoming a successful referee, with lots of advice on which games to opt for, how to write scenarios and organise your campaigns efficiently, how to deal with any awkward players, and how to make sure that everyone has a brilliant time at your roleplaying sessions. So, don't miss it, and the rest of **arcane** 13, out on Friday 1st November.

now the work's over the fun begins

GAMES FO

If we were game inventors rather than just for playing could we expe

When you spend your entire working life playing games and getting paid for it, occasions arise when you think you've had a brilliant idea for a new game that everyone's going to want to play, and which will make you famous and wealthy very quickly. The sober light of morning usually brings you to your senses, but not this time. So, here are the games **arcane** would like to see produced...

arcane would like to thank Mike Hodder for his assistance in the initial conception of this feature. He will be suitably rewarded with objects of desire.

Slacker: the boardgame for lazy people

A game in which players, using a dice, go round a board trying to do as little as possible. Land on a Slacker square and you pick up a 'Slacker' card. Each 'Slacker' card has a skive which will earn you a certain number of Slacker points. The value of the card will depend on how good the skive is. A 'Fag Break', for example, will only earn you two points, but pick up a 'Good Morning with Anne & Nick' and you make a cool 25 points, for nothing. But beware: land on a Bummer square and you must take a 'Bummer' card. These involve work – and you lose Slacker points. 'Bummer' cards include such horrors as 'The fridge is empty – go to the all-night garage (-2 points)' and the dreaded 'Fill out an Income Support form (-50 points)'. The most serious 'Bummer' is 'Six o'clock start – take the 6-2 shift at the local chicken factory and put your hand up the arses of countless chickens as they go by on the conveyor belt, to make sure they have no guts left inside (-100 points).' But then you might pull a nice 'Slacker' such as 'Join the House of Lords – your selfish attitude makes you a perfect asset for the Party, become a 'working' peer. Don't bother to turn up, even to vote – unless, of course, they try to bring back the Poll Tax (+100 points),' for example.

Torvill & Dean on the Playstation

An interesting and innovative departure from the usual I-win-you-lose fare dished out by Sony. In this game, you work *with* other players, not against them – co-operation is the key to high marks. Some of those more difficult twists and loops, where they spin around grinning like a pair of lunatics, will probably take months of dedicated practice to perfect, but if you can also manage top marks for artistic content, fame and fortune await. And then there are all the 'Dance Spectaculars on Ice' to look forward to after you retire. The logical follow-up to this successful new genre of Playstation game would be eight-player synchronised swimming – looks like we'll have to get some new joypads.

Pop Star: the Fighting Fantasy Adventure Book

Live out your fantasies and try to battle your way to the top of the pops in this Steve Jackson-style game book. Choose your band members and set out on the road to fame with your first crap pub gig. Can you sing? Or do you get bottled off stage? Your fate depends on which page you turn to...

How will the high life treat you? Do you bed loads of groupies, or are you the ugly one who everybody takes the piss out of? Do you swear at Gaby Roslin on her chat show and throw your mike stand at the presenter on *Top of the Pops?* Or do you compromise and turn into a squeaky clean teeny-shocker? And what happens to you in the end? Do you live it up in Beverly Hills? Or do you wind up in a Rolls Royce at the bottom of a swimming pool? Suicide? Overdose? Car crash? The choice is yours...

R A LAUGH

d got paid for making games, em, what exciting innovations to see produced?

PBM Trivial Pursuit

In which you spend your leisure time writing reams of daft *Triv* talk, such as: "All right then mate. Let's see if you can get this one for a big, fat cheese [cough]. 'What was Botticelli's…' No, sorry, wait a minute, that's Arts & Literature, isn't it? You want brown, don't you? No, not brown – green. Green's for Entertainments, isn't it? Is it? Yes – oh no! This is *so* easy. How come you always get all the easy ones and I get all the hard ones – like that blue one I had about the Mariana Trench last week, ha ha. That was *so* difficult! This really is ridiculous [cough]. All the easy ones are in this box. You've fixed the decks, haven't you, ha ha ha… No, I'm only joking. Okay then. You'll kick yourself if you don't get this one, though [cough]. 'What is the most boring game in the history of the world, ever?' And remember, you've only got one week to answer."

Roadrunner CCG

So, you've loaded your deck with 'High Mountain' and 'Boulder' cards and the fool is heading this way from out across the desert, ignorant of your presence. You know there's a 'Stick of Dynamite' just waiting to come off the top of your deck, and that this will trigger the desired effect. You've even managed to sneak in a 'Mathematical Formula', so you know when the blighter's going to go by. Then, with victory only a hand away, your opponent lays two identical 'Meep' cards depicting the Roadrunner with a sideways, slightly smug grin, and follows this with a 'Coyote's Karma', reversing the effect of your malevolence back on to you so you end up a frazzled stick-coyote with blinking white eyes and sticking out fur.

Live-Action Coppit

As the illustration shows, LRP *Coppit* has been one of our favourite games at **arcane** this month. There's nothing quite like stepping into the cloner after a hard day's games playing, duplicating your cell structure a couple of times and then going round your opponents' 'manors' trying to jump on top of enemy 'hats' and take them back to your 'house'. This simple, fun game was all the rage in California and on Brazilian beaches this year. Some say it's just a fad, but the game's increasing popularity may be explained by the fact that it requires no special equipment to play – and so is as suited to the dusty streets of Soweto as it is to the playing fields of Eton. All you need is a simple chalk grid on a playground, some ordinary, household, multi-coloured pointy hats, and some sort of steampunk cloning device with a large enough chamber to fit humans in.

Happy families RPG

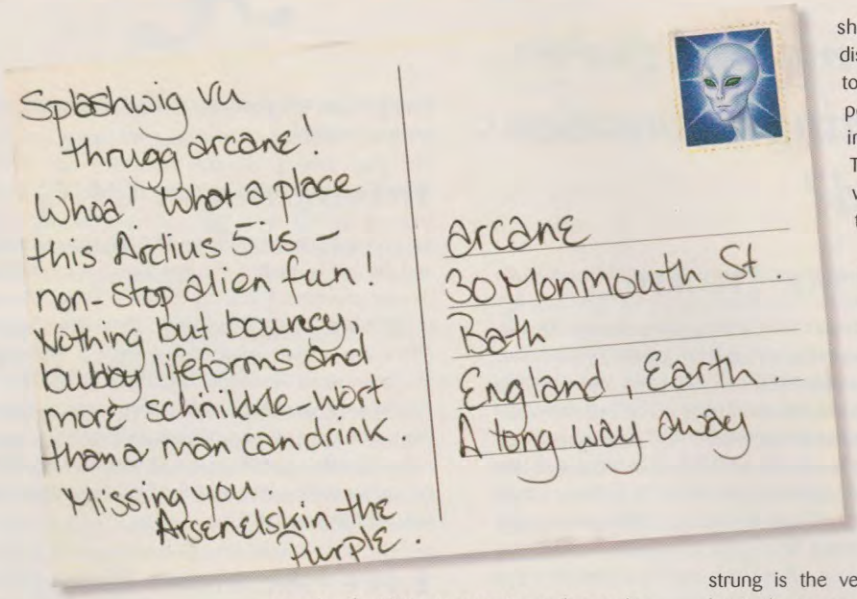
Who would you like to play? Mummy? Daddy? Perhaps little Sydney, who plays football (and truant), or his little mate, Alfy, who plays with cars (real ones). Or maybe even his kid sister, Wendy, who plays with matches…

Yes folks, it's *Happy Families* time. Or is it? Not if you roll a critical failure and put that football through dad's greenhouse. And what about the walloping you'll receive afterwards? 'Oh no! That's a big roll, dad… Look what you've done? Fell over, did he?' Yes, be warned: family life is an emotional cauldron – anything can happen. And what will happen to your clan over the years? Will they be dysfunctional but happy, or will it end in tears? Maybe daddy loses his job and mummy loses her crack-pipe down the toilet, or maybe little Wendy plays with matches once too often… 'Oh dear – you don't want to leave that shotgun lying around like that…'

Well, we're sure you've all thought of a few games you'd like to see developed and published. Send us your ideas and our artists will mock up the best of them. Then we'll see if any of our friends in the games industry can oblige.

On The R

Road travel needn't just be about getting from one adventure to the next. ***Paul White*** *takes a look at the 'road movie', and considers how it can be used as a model for entire campaigns set on the move.*


Splashwig vu thrugg arcane!
Whoa! What a place this Ardius 5 is – non-stop alien fun! Nothing but bouncy, bubbly lifeforms and more schnikkle-wort than a man can drink.
Missing you. Arsenelskin the Purple.
arcane
30 Monmouth St.
Bath
England, Earth.
A long way away

"The journey takes two days and is largely uneventful. You reach the town of Morduin just as the sun is setting."

Sound familiar? I use lines like this all the time in my games, and I'm sure I'm not the only one. So you might throw in the occasional wandering monster encounter, or maybe a chance meeting with an unfortunate merchant who's foolishly got his cart stuck in a ford, but generally we tend to gloss over those parts of an adventure that involve travelling. You need to get the players from one adventure location to the next, and you don't want too many distractions along the way. That's understandable, but it ignores the great potential that road-based stories have. We all tend to think of road travel as a necessary link between adventures. But what if, just for a change, the travelling was the adventure?

Take the High Road

There are ample examples in literature and cinema where what we might call the underlying plot involves the principle characters embarking on a long journey, and how they cope with the various challenges that rise up to meet them along the way. The classic American road movie tends to centre around a young couple or small group crossing the US in an open-top sedan, and is as much about self-discovery as it is about high adventure across spectacular and varied landscapes.

From a campaign design point of view, a broader definition of the road movie is more useful. If you take as your model the idea of a group of adventurous travellers (the party) setting off on a long and no doubt potentially hazardous trip across largely unknown and unexplored territory, you begin to open up some of the many possibilities this style of campaign has to offer to players of just about any game genre. Your group could be anything from crusading heroes battling the forces of evil, wherever they may be, to wanted criminals on the run from dogged lawmen or servants of a powerful individual. And they might indeed be travelling through the US, but their trek could just as easily take them across a snow-covered world, a barren alien desert, or an unchartered region of the galaxy.

Here, at last, is a chance to dig out all those great old scenarios from magazines that you could never squeeze into your more structured campaigns. Free from the constraints of having to design a large city or dungeon complex, you can happily toss in offbeat cameo encounters and even full-blown diversionary adventures without fear of disrupting the flow of the campaign. In fact, their incongruous presence will only add to the overall effect. A road movie should have a slightly disjointed, almost surreal feel to it – a phantasmagoria of people, places and interesting experiences. This type of campaign might well turn out to be one of the easiest you've ever run.

The main reason you have this freedom is that the structure of a road campaign is not provided by a complex plot, which must be thought out carefully in advance, requiring many hours of painstaking preparation by us hard-working referees. Instead, the thread upon which it is strung is the very reason the characters begin the journey in the first place. It is the pursuit of that goal which drives the party forward, leads them from encounter to encounter, and binds the whole shooting match together into a coherent campaign. But then, not everyone who hits the road has the same purpose in mind.

Chaosium's brilliant *Horror on the Orient Express* for *Call of Cthulhu* is the best example of a road campaign that I know of. It has a strong underlying plot, a number of recurring characters, intriguing cameos, makes good use of the changing landscape and keeps the PCs constantly on the move. If you haven't played it yet, I suggest you have a word with your referee.

Where Exactly do you Think you are Going?

The key to any campaign set on the road is motivation. The reason why the PCs set out in the first place is the thread that links each adventure, and which gives the game a campaign feel, rather than simply feeling like a series of disparate adventures. Of course, not all events in the campaign need to involve this central theme, so long as it's there to bring the characters back in line and to get them on the move again.

And it's not unusual for characters to have more than one motivation, often in direct opposition to one another. While the group as a unit needs some definite reason to begin its journey, even if it's as simple as the coincidence that they happen to be travelling in the same direction, consider giving each character one or more secret reasons for boarding that train, taking that interstellar journey, or joining the quest for the legendary Talking Sword of T'Riwogan.

OAD AGAIN

Here are just a few suggested motivations, both group and personal, for player characters to hit the road:

Philanthropy: The PCs are hobo heroes, travelling from town to town, righting wrongs and helping old ladies across the street. The simplest, purest of motivations, it is more interesting if used for only one or two individuals rather than an entire party, because conflicting philosophies provide much of the vital internal conflict among travelling groups. Reasons for such generosity of spirit might be a sense of chivalry *(Don Quixote),* involvement with a secret organisation *(Knight Rider),* or even some divine purpose *(Highway to Heaven).*

Hedonism: This person is just in it for the kicks – life is there for the living. Compulsive thrill-seekers usually have some darker, hidden aspect to their character, the underlying reason why they have such a reckless attitude to life, but to most people they just appear to be a liability. Mad, bad and dangerous to know, but fun to play.

Escape: On the run from the law, whether innocently accused (boring) or genuinely guilty (much more interesting) of a heinous crime, or running from a frightening experience such as a powerful enemy, haunted dreams, an ancient curse or even an arranged marriage, these characters just want to get as far away from a certain place, and perhaps certain people, as quickly as possible *(Thelma and Louise, Bonnie and Clyde, Wisdom).* They won't want to stay in one place too long, may well come across as paranoid and self-serving, and find it hard to trust anyone. The strain of living in constant fear of capture can also make them dangerously unpredictable.

Employment: The PCs are hired to undertake a long and undoubtedly perilous journey. This might be as outwardly straightforward as guarding a caravan, or be part of a complex investigation involving tracking down a witness or escaped felon *(Midnight Run),* or finding a lost or stolen item. This option provides a simple group motivation, which can be made more interesting by giving one or more characters conflicting interests in the outcome, or additional contracts which take precedence over that undertaken by the group, such as to assassinate an important NPC, to implicate or even murder another PC, or to steal something of value.

Quest: You know this one. A fabulous item of antiquity must be found or destroyed in order to safeguard the people of the free world from the tyranny of an evil overlord *(Lord of the Rings,* David Eddings' *Elenium).* Of course, there is much more you can do to add spice to this old chestnut. Perhaps not everyone wants this item found, and these people have an agent in the PC's party. Or they might want to find it in order to destroy it. The curse of Boromir might afflict one of the PCs, causing them to desire it for themselves, and higher powers might take an interest if the item is important enough. And once found, you can guarantee the item itself will refuse to act as it should. It might not appreciate being found, could have a malign influence on its finder, or even have an agenda of its own. Perhaps it's not even an item, but a person that is being sought. A lost lover, a missing friend or relative, a kidnapped leader, or the man who killed your father. While this may appear to be a hackneyed theme, there are still plenty of miles left in it yet for an imaginative referee.

Going home: Catapulted hundreds of light years from home by freak cosmic events *(Star Trek: Voyager),* searching for the lost ancient realm of your ancestors *(Battlestar Galactica),* summoned home from distant lands to aid in a national crisis, or maybe just lost and trying to find a way home *(Homeward Bound).* The degree of urgency required by your travellers will depend on their precise reasons for seeking out their home, and the distances involved, but circumstances will contrive to both speed and delay the journey. Again, a useful motivation for a group, which can be made more interesting if everyone doesn't share the same enthusiasm for reaching their planned destination,

There are obviously too many movies with a road setting for me to provide a comprehensive list, but some you may find useful are *Easy Rider, El Mariachi, From Dusk Till Dawn, Kalifornia, Mad Max, The Hitcher, Thelma and Louise* and *Wild at Heart.*

A Hostile Land

The Highlands are under siege. Sorcerous servants of the Sea Princes of the south have constructed a series of warp gates through which they have summoned countless creatures of malevolence to aid them in their centuries-old war with the peoples of the Highlands. But your enemies have made a fatal miscalculation. These beasts are not of your world, and they cannot be controlled. What's more, they have lost control of the gates themselves, so now nothing can stop the flow of these creatures into your world. Now all the lands south of the border are overrun with alien creatures, rampaging through towns and villages with destruction their only purpose. The Sea Princes have fled, abandoning their cities. But someone needs to get to these gates, and ensure that they are closed and sealed. That task has fallen upon a select group of heroes drawn from each of the northern realms, who must cross the border and find a way to stop the incursions before the entire continent is overrun. The road is a perilous one – the enemy is wild and unknown, you are but a few against many, the Sea Princes may not welcome your presence, you know of the location of only one gate, and you will be a long way from home. May Sanmar guide you, friend. Looks like you'll need all the help you can get. A useful source: C.J. Cherryh's *Chronicles of Morgaine.*

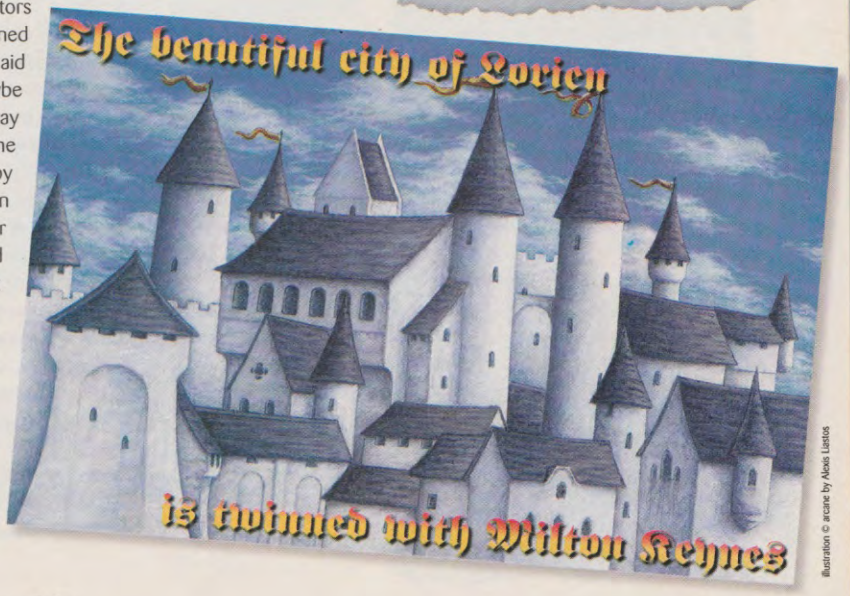


Illustration © arcane by Alexis Liatsos

Dear Arcane,
Been having a lovely time here in the misty forest home of Lorien. Bagged myself a hobgoblin the other day, but was a bit messy! Be seeing you soon.
Arsenelskin the Pink.

Arcane
30 Monmouth St
Bath
England
The Temporal Plane

perhaps because of some trouble they had before they left (an irrational fear, maybe brought on by dreams or premonitions) or because of something that happens along the way (such as finding an idyllic land, being manipulated by a nefarious spell-jockey, getting involved in a war, or falling in love).

The Fugitive

The stern, raven-haired figure waiting for you in the deserted parking lot beneath the Hotel Casablanca is not your usual Johnson. She is curt, almost hostile in manner, and you never quite catch a glimpse of her face. But a job's a job, and things haven't been so great lately that you can afford to pick and choose. So when she tells you the contract involves tracking down a former employee believed to be heading cross-country, you figure why not? You could use a break, and how difficult could it be? You follow the trail, grab the suit and bring him home, maybe taking in a few of the sights along the way.

When you look up, she's gone, leaving an unmarked file. When you open it you get a bit of a shock. The man you've just agreed to track down is none other than your usual contact. And what's more, while they'd like him back in one piece, it doesn't really matter so long as you bring his head. Something is seriously wrong with this picture, and your instincts tell you not to trust this mysterious Johnson. But you've made a deal, and you've never pulled out of a contract yet. Just make sure you watch your back...

Useful sources: *Johnny Mnemonic, Midnight Run*

There is plenty of reading material out there, from Jack Kerouac's autobiographical *On The Road*, through classics such as Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Homer's *Odyssey*, Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* and Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days*, to the fantasies of Tolkien, Eddings and Gene Wolfe's *Book of the New Sun*.

For those with an abiding interest in the genre of road movies, track down *Road Movies: A Complete Guide to Cinema on Wheels* by Mark Williams (Proteus, 1982). Hardly essential but useful nonetheless.

A race: Possibly a sporting event, such as a cross-country car rally *(The Cannonball Run, Death Race 2000)* or a wager on circumnavigating the globe *(Around the World in 80 Days)*. It might have a harder edge, such as a race against time to rescue the inhabitants of a distant planet from an imminent meteor storm or nova star, to reach the defenceless colonists before an invading enemy fleet, or to recover the five parts of a sacred artefact before the celebrations of an important holy day. Better suited to shorter campaigns, this style of game generates a more immediate excitement, and corresponding frustration when obstacles delay the PCs. It brings out the competitive edge in players, and concentrates on establishing teamwork rather than a conflict of interests. It's particularly good for use in light-hearted games, and establishing a real-time deadline can greatly enhance the effect.

The Road to Hell

Just because we use the term road movie doesn't mean your campaign has to follow a typical cross-country road journey. By broadening your horizons you open up numerous possibilities which could make for enjoyable campaigns. The road your players take might indeed be of car-worn modern tarmac, but it could just as reasonably be a dusty dirt trail, a system of tunnels in an underground world, a path through a vast forest, or even no road to speak of at all, with the players as pioneers exploring virgin territory. Perhaps it's a combination of all these and more. The point is that what the road is made of is not nearly as important as the people who travel it, and the things that happen to them along the way.

Waterworld could feasibly host a road movie-style campaign; Agatha Christie's *Death on the Nile* and *Murder on the Orient Express* suggest just some of the possibilities of river and railroad travel; a post-apocalyptic world could make a mechanised form of transport vital for survival *(Mad Max)*; and the highways of space are limitless – campaigns could range from the earliest manned interstellar probes to cargo runs across galactic empires *(Star Wars)*. What if the characters were miniaturised as part of a flawed scientific experiment *(Land of the Giants)*? Their road could be something as relatively mundane as a building, a garden *(Honey I Shrunk the Kids)*, or even the inside of the human body *(Innerspace)*. It could even be said that both *Dr Who* and *Quantum Leap* are road movies of a sort, if the road in question is time (see our 'Tinkering With Time' feature in **arcane** 7 for some of the possibilities of time travel).

Any situation which places the characters a long way from familiar territory, which forces them to tackle their problems with a minimum of assistance (with no help to call on if things start to go awry), and where they never know what will be around the next corner, beyond the next star system or in the next time zone, is a perfectly viable setting for a campaign.

Your road campaign also affords you the opportunity to develop your game universe as you go, with input from players as they meet each new challenge. Even if they don't actually visit all of them, characters will see or hear of towns, cities, mountains, forests and lakes. They will tackle different climates and weather conditions, and they'll meet members of different species of varying intelligence and disposition. By the time your players reach the end of the road you will have created most of the basic elements of a campaign setting that you can continue developing for years to come, whether it is a fantastic continent, a near-future metroplex or a distant alien civilisation.

Call the Shots

The main advantage of running a road campaign for referees is its inherent flexibility. While you have your underlying theme and possibly conflicting individual motivations, you also have an open road where nothing is predetermined, and the unexpected is the only thing players can be sure of. The potential cast of characters is endless, as are the situations into which the characters might fall.

Early encounters should look at the initial reasons for taking the journey – the meeting with the employer, the attempted robbery, that cosmic mishap – and the first few steps along the road. This sets up some basic plot ideas which you can return to at appropriate stages throughout the journey, to remind players of why they're out there and perhaps instill a touch of urgency when required. Also, you don't want your campaign to degenerate into a series of barely-linked mini-adventures, so the presence of recurring NPCs, enemies and allies is invaluable. These familiar faces could also provide an opportunity to replace fallen comrades, if the rest of the party thinks they can be trusted.

Fluidity is the essential element in combining encounters in a road campaign. In an ideal world one encounter should flow seamlessly into the next with barely a pause for breath. An encounter with a group of travelling players leads to new companions joining the band. One of the newcomers starts a fight at a roadside watering hole, and a fellow patron is killed. In fleeing, the party enters a dangerous woodland inhabited by reclusive tribal people who jealously guard their home. Taking refuge in a ramshackle old inn, one of the PCs has a family heirloom stolen by a goblin thief who had also hidden there. Meanwhile, the natives are getting restless outside, the family of the dead man blames the PCs and wants revenge, the authorities have also been made aware of their exploits and would like a word, and that damn gobbo's pinched your great-grandfather's enchanted snuff box. Where to next? You still need to find the last clue to the whereabouts of the Crown of the Dragonking, at least one member of the party has a hidden agenda, and the elf continues to pine over her lost love…

Personal Touches

Perhaps the most important thing to remember when planning encounters is to personalise them. Get at least one of the PCs involved on an emotional level with whatever's going on, and their resulting drive will enthuse the whole party. That holds true for everything from roadside conversations with itinerant priests and travelling salesmen, diverting cameos with bands of gypsies and eccentric wizards, to full-blown adventures such as a self-contained murder mystery (these work particularly well on the road, because the circle of suspects is so clearly defined and you are usually far from any law enforcement agents), an unnerving fellow traveller you can't get rid of *(The Hitcher)* or a chilling night at a lonely cliff-top motel. If you want to tempt the players from the road, then prey on their characters' weaknesses; if you want them to make faster progress, then prey on their fears. Make yourself familiar with each character's past, and that includes pre-generated background as well as events that occurred during the game, and give each player their chance in the limelight.

Putting it all together is largely a matter of pacing, and also avoiding the feeling that the players are being railroaded into following a defined path. The first decision you need to make is how long should the campaign be, or indeed if it should be open-ended. In *Quantum Leap,* Sam Beckett never actually found a way home, but continued leaping through the past long after the series finished.

You will probably want your campaign to reach a definite conclusion, but you don't necessarily need to know what it is in advance, just so long as you can recognise it when it comes along. That means having a rough idea of where things are going. How far is it to the Forest of Atierne? How long will it take to travel across the galaxy at maximum warp, if you could find sufficient fuel?

Wherever possible, allow the players the freedom to determine their own course. If they choose to leave the train, then let them. If it's important to their own goals that they rejoin it, then they'll just have to catch up. The referee's job is to make sure they don't forget those goals, and to remind them of why they began their journey in the first place, and why they need to keep moving.

Sometimes the characters will spend time in a location such as an inn or village, slowing the pace of the campaign and allowing time for reflection. This also provides the referee with an opportunity to develop a more involved storyline with a wider cast of characters. But don't let them dwell too long in any one place, and try to avoid large settlements if possible. Most characters will have reasons for steering clear of big city distractions and authorities, so that shouldn't be a problem. Try out encounters of varying lengths and styles, from harmless fun through swashbuckling adventure to blood-curdling horror, though anything that takes up more than two sessions is probably too involved for a road campaign.

Mix up the occasional slower, investigative-style scenario with a breakneck chase scene in the dead of night, and above all be flexible. As individual motivations and goals become apparent, relationships within the party should develop and provide many an evening's entertainment with little or no input from the referee.

The real test of a road campaign comes in retrospect. If your players get off at the last stop feeling like they've been on a non-stop rollercoaster ride, you may find they'll never want to settle down again.

Many classic Westerns provide useful models for fantasy campaigns set on the road. Just substitute orcs for Indians, broadswords for sixguns, and the perilous realm of Sangria for the American northwest. Check out *Stagecoach, The Oregon Trail* and the mini-series *Lonesome Dove* for some inspiration.

Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night,* made in 1934 and starring Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert, is probably the earliest example of a road movie. Although a bit dated, it remains a classic of its type.

Lost in Space

The crew of the Titan Mining Corporation scout ship Odyssey, prospecting in the Devauren system at the very edge of explored space, picks up what may be a distress signal, emanating from deep inside the El-Andra nebula. Records show this area to be something of a Bermuda triangle, with several ships having disappeared here over the past three years. Still, a distress signal can't be ignored, so the Odyssey enters the nebula. Fluctuating energy readings play havoc with the sensors, but eventually another ship is discovered, the Dulcinea, a merchant ship, straining to pull free of a great rift in space. Just as the Odyssey arrives the other ship begins to break up under the strain. There is nothing the Odyssey crew can do, but it has its own problems. It is caught in the rift's gravitational field, and faces the same fate as the Dulcinea. All attempts to pull free fail, leaving only one option – to head into the anomaly, and pray they live to see whatever lies on the other side. Star charts indicate the Odyssey has travelled half a million light years from its previous location. It is hopelessly lost. Faced with the choice of making the long journey home, or heading further into unchartered territory, what would you do? Perhaps that curiously configured ship that has just appeared on your sensors will help you make up your mind. It appears to be powering up its weapon systems…

Useful sources: *Star Trek* (original series), *Star Trek: Voyager, Red Dwarf*

0891 321 310

INTERACTIVE INFORMATION LINES

ONE NUMBER, MANY OPTIONS

CALL THIS NUMBER NOW

0891 321 310

TO FIND OUT EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

WIZARDS OF THE COAST, WHITE WOLF
THE X-FILES NEW GAME

ENTER THE X-FILES COMPETITION - FIND OUT ABOUT DICEMASTER
CHECK THE NEW RELEASES FOR THE WEEK AHEAD
WHAT IS HOBBYCON?

PLUS MANY MANY MORE IN-DEPTH OPTIONS

BE AHEAD OF THE REST
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE IN THE DARK AGAIN
YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO ASK ANYONE, JUST CALL...

0891 321 310

KICKING OFF WITH MANY OPTIONS TO CHOOSE

0891 321 310

IF YOU LIKE CARD GAMES RPGS, WANT TO BE IN THE KNOW
AND HAVE THE EDGE OVER THE REST, CALL TODAY
LEARN ABOUT THE GAMES WITHOUT ASKING

0891 321 310

JUST CALL THE HOBBY INTERACTIVE INFORMATION LINES

0891 321 310

ONE NUMBER COVERING EVERYTHING YOU NEED
THE HARD PART IS CHOOSING WHAT OPTION

0891 321 310

A SERVICE THAT SERVES YOU

LINES ALWAYS UPDATED

Calls at 39p per minute cheap rate - 49p all other times - UK only. Sept 1996

New Fantasy Settings part 3: Rebirth and Enlightenment

*This month **Phil Masters** delves into Renaissance, Enlightenment, Napoleonic and Victorian campaign settings.*

Anyone looking to create a post-medieval fantasy world should read plenty of novels by Tim Powers – especially *The Drawing of the Dark*, *On Stranger Tides*, *The Anubis Gates* and *The Stress of Her Regard*.

Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay (published by Hogshead, under license from Games Workshop) is set in a world based on Renaissance Europe. It combines traditional fantasy medievalism (knights, Vikings and castles) with black powder weapons and a rising bourgeoisie.

The first two parts of this series looked at pre-Medieval societies. This month, we move into slightly more advanced eras. Sticking with a remote historical basis gives a gameworld a sense of detachment and exoticism, while still giving players who know a bit of history something to latch on to. Conversely, a post-Medieval setting makes for a richer feel (in every sense), and less niggling thoughts that everybody ought to be lurching around in the mud, catching bubonic plague.

Rebirth

The Renaissance is already the source of more RPG material than most people realise – especially in games that use gunpowder and fencing weapons.

Classical learning was being rediscovered, and combined with a catalogue of new developments, including the idea that human beings should be able and willing to explore new ideas. There was an upsurge in political change, artistic creativity and religious debate. This was also an age of long-range exploration, and the period when gunpowder first started to dominate the battlefield. However, for a lot of peasants the change was hard to see, and things carried on much as ever. After all, the Renaissance was an artistic movement that started in one city – Florence – and then slowly spread to other areas.

A fantasy campaign set in such a time could be dynamic and exciting. Every event needn't be based on a new invention or idea – the Renaissance saw much interest in Greek and Roman thought, and adventurers could similarly become involved in the study of ancient magics or special knowledge.

Technology: The various technological advances of the Renaissance destroyed the medieval world. Crude but effective guns, along with refined tactics for bow or pike, brought down the armoured knight, while bigger cannons made castles less useful. Meanwhile, improved sailing ships opened up the world, and the printing press spread education and religious debate across European society.

These are the sort of things that PC adventurers could easily find interesting – not just guns, but piracy on the high seas, widely available books of lore and wars over religion. Note, however, that having several new inventions all appearing at the same time could need some explanation. Refs should avoid having the PCs involved in every new development. Furthermore, deadlier weapons could upset the balance of a fantasy campaign, if players are expecting to engage in the usual swordplay.

Fortunately, the latter problem can be controlled by a dose of realism. Black powder firearms are slow to load, inaccurate and dangerous in clumsy hands, so mêlée combat will still be commonplace, and with any armour rendered futile by the guns on the

battlefield, most swords can be swift, elegant rapiers, allowing for swashbuckling combat.

Social Organisation: The point about social change is that society becomes unstable and dynamic. Unlike a realistic medieval setting, a Renaissance-based world permits characters a real chance of rising in society. The real-world Renaissance also saw a lot of devious politics and scheming; Machiavelli, the Medici and the Borgias are all Renaissance figures. This sort of thing can be a lot of fun for players who enjoy complicated social plots, although refs should be careful not to put simple hack-and-slash gamers up against anything more devious than they can handle. A true Renaissance-style world – one based on Medici Italy – should be divided up into a large number of small city-states with complex political systems dominated by a mixture of aristocrats, merchants and adventurers made good, plus an ambitious set of religious leaders, and a couple of empires which are seeking to take over the lot.

For another fantasy novel set in the Renaissance, see *Popes and Phantoms*, by John Whitbourn. For an image of a Renaissance mage and his world, see the film *Prospero's Books* (which is based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*).

The Supernatural: Although the Renaissance saw the rise of learning and some decline in superstition, it also involved belief in the supernatural. Many modern ideas about magic, especially in the European tradition, come from the fringes of Renaissance scholarship. Alchemy, hermetic magic and intricate maps of Heaven and Hell all go back centuries, but were systematised during the Renaissance. This is the age of Faustus and the Art of Memory. A game spell-caster could well be a scholar/philosopher, or the representative of some obscure tradition. Scholarly Renaissance magic may be easier to handle than the messy, spirit-based witchcraft or shamanism that is accurate for earlier periods.

There is, of course, no shortage of fiction set in either a realistic 19th century, or a lightly fantasised version. For more fantasy-heavy Victorian-style tales, see Randall Garrett's *Lord Darcy* books.

Of course, improved firearms make flashy magic of the fireball-and-lightning bolt variety less advantageous. With gunpowder, you don't have to be a wizard to kill at range with fire and explosions. This is another reason to shift the focus to thoughtful sorts of magic.

Folk beliefs survived throughout this period, making all sorts of faeries and goblins plausible in games, along with angels, devils and perhaps strange beings brought back from distant lands by explorers. Or you can take inspiration from the Renaissance interest in classical myth – *Lace and Steel* had Centaurs, Satyrs and Harpies in a Renaissance world.

GURPS Goblins (reviewed in **arcane** 6), is probably the only Georgian fantasy roleplaying setting on the market. It's a strange sort of Georgian setting, but very accurate.

Towards Enlightenment

The Renaissance had seen advances in commerce, technology and scholarship. These changes culminated in a series of great civil and international wars, along with the beginnings of modern science and technology. In the changed society that emerged, philosophers proclaimed the Triumph of Reason, and began to talk about social equality and the Rights of Man. On the other hand, powerful kings now had better-organised civil services and armies at their command, and began to centralise power in a way that the old feudal nobility would never have tolerated. This was the age of Enlightenment.

At this point, around the 18th century, style went through the ceiling (at least for the rich) – think mirrored ballrooms and foppish gentlemen all challenging each other to pistol duels. Most warriors wear dramatic, highly-coloured uniforms and start calling themselves professionals.

Some nations in such a world can be almost democratic and others may be run by 'Enlightened Despots', well-educated monarchs who have read about the new ideas, adopted some of them and declared themselves the First Servants of the state.

For game purposes, there's also the option of an early Industrial Revolution, which can either use steam and wrought iron, as in the real world, or magical power – perhaps scholars are getting the hang of making magic reliable and consistent.

Technology: On the battlefield, muskets have become reliable, and the bayonet replaces the pike. Only officers bother with swords, although their class still engages in enough duels to make fencing skills useful. Armour is pretty much a dead issue, and canon put paid to castles – any fortifications are based on large-scale earthworks.

With the castle gone, the upper classes can build houses for comfort rather than defence. They also develop more elegant fashions in dress and furniture. At sea, well-built sailing vessels can reach any ocean in the world. Although the Steam Age has not really arrived, the first simple, fixed engines are working mine pumps, while on a smaller

scale, sophisticated clocks and watches involve intricate, ingenious mechanisms, so the occasional display of steampunk tech isn't out of place.

Social Organisation: With feudalism dead and capitalism still developing, this era sees the clash of the great modern social ideas – democracy vs central control. In a few generations, France went from the power of Louis XIV, the 'Sun King,' to the Revolution which beheaded Louis XVI. Thus, games based on a fantasised Enlightenment can involve questions of power and right which are alien to medieval settings. The Evil King doesn't just double taxes and send his thugs out to beat up the peasants, he runs a bureaucracy that watches out for any sign of dissent, and squashes any would-be rebels. Meanwhile, revolutionaries don't just want to kill the upper-class tyrants, they have complicated theories explaining why they are entitled to do so.

The Supernatural: The Enlightenment saw a fashion for fairy tales, the first translations of the Arabian Nights, and the birth of Gothic fiction. The Gothic tradition might be the best starting place. The supernatural is associated with terror, the alien and madness. Old castles on wind-swept cliffs, haunted houses, mad monks and musty libraries full of forbidden knowledge should be common images. That's not to say all magic should be treated as evil – scholars can bring the Light of Reason to bear on anything – but the supernatural will always involve a step outside the spirit of this age.

Napoleonic Times

By the end of the 18th century, many features of the modern age were in place. The various revolutions culminated in the overthrow of kings, which in turn led to a continent-wide struggle for power. From Hornblower to Sharpe, the heroes of this war have been popular with readers. However, there have not been many Napoleonic RPGs, perhaps because there are problems with games in a military setting – soldiers obey orders, PCs often don't.

One fantasy/Napoleonic wargame on the market is *Flintloque,* which exploits the potential of muskets, supremely drilled troops and killer uniforms. For those with a fondness for Hornblower, Ramage and Aubrey and Maturin, a naval version might be fun, mixing cannon-laden wooden warships with weather spells and elementals. However, although the label for this period comes from the name of a general, roleplayers might want to look further afield.

This is also the period of the Regency, of the birth of the Steam Age and of all those Jane Austen novels. Gamers with a taste for character interaction, social climbing and romance should love it. Fantasy elements can be fitted in, with elvish ladies passing barbed ironies around elegant parties, and heroines falling for suave, dangerous sorcerers in knee-breeches. An ambitious ref might mix all the aspects together, with spies in Regency-style courts, swashbuckling naval officers coming home to spend their prize money on big country houses, and steam engineers at war and peace.

Technology: The Industrial Revolution is well underway now, although its consequences have not yet filtered through to some spheres of life. Cannon and musketry may be more powerful, but tactics are much the same as before. Horseback or foot remain the only common ways of getting around, and sails still rule the seas. However, by the end of the period the first railway lines will be in the planning stage. Smoke-blackened factories are springing up, which may be better news for the owners than for the working class.

Social Organisation: The Industrial Revolution results in a huge new class of urban factory workers and a complex web of trade and investment. Someone has had to invent limited companies and the stock exchange. But there is still a big gap between rich and poor, and blatant social climbers are despised. Dealing with characters from other classes should be tricky for any PC, leading to both comedy and roleplaying challenges. Industry isn't necessarily the only source of wealth – some great fortunes were made in the slave trade. In a fantasy

Tales of Gargentihr, originally from Sanctuary Games, now owned by Digital Animations Ltd, is set in a fantasy world which owes a lot to the Enlightenment, but also contains a fair amount of strange and twisted magic. The game may currently be hard to find, but it's well worth looking out for.

Faith and Reason

The closer the historical era you take as the basis for your gameworld is to the present day, the more problems you may encounter in making its religion feel right. This is especially likely to be a problem if you start by including a polytheistic jumble of gods, as fantasy games so often do. After all, weird cults of Thor, Zeus, Isis and Cthulhu make for so many interesting plot ideas...

But they are also associated with ancient societies, before the rise of the great monotheisms. Recent-era societies have generally had one dominant faith – and getting the style of such worlds right may demand that any priests are non-combatants, either saintly and modest or frothing fanatics. In fact, it may be that a really plausible Renaissance or later style world demands a single, dominant religion – anything else implies a messy, incomprehensible cosmos, which rules out science and rationalism.

There's no room to discuss the latter theory here, but the central problem is clear enough – how to adjust the religious element of a culture when you're using it as an inspiration, without everything else looking wrong.

Frankly, the best approach is probably to keep religion in the background, even if that means dropping a whole category of character powers. If priests have supernatural abilities at all, they could either have 'ordinary' magic which happens to be a secret of their sect or temple, or functions as some kind of vaguely-defined power of faith. The former might indicate that some religions are frauds, using mere ordinary magic, or it may be the result of a sincere priesthood holding on to a few mundane secrets in case of emergencies or out of scholarly curiosity. (Remember all those stories about secret libraries in the Vatican?)

Of course, if you are using rules in which priests have, say, a monopoly on healing magic, and your PCs are likely to need a lot of doctoring, then de-emphasising priests in the game may lead to problems. Better to use more flexible rule systems, so that you either have magicians with healing magic, or scientific medicine (perhaps boosted by semi-magical effects) that can do enough to keep PCs alive.

world, with mind-control magics and multiple intelligent species, slavery could be even worse than in reality. However, there may be an abolitionist movement – a fine cause for high-minded heroes.

The Supernatural: The Gothic spirit survives into this era, although it may be starting to look dated – the early 19th century did produce Frankenstein. It may be appropriate to treat magic as more of a science, and fictional science such as Frankenstein's looks unnervingly close to magic. On the other hand, this setting has more of a modern feel, so you might treat magicians and non-humans as part of a rational world.

One option is to accept the idea that cold iron is antithetical to magic and Faerie, making the Industrial Revolution bad news for some. This can give games a melancholic edge, as magic is forced into retreat and elves retire to their hidden places.

The Victorian Age

Recently, a number of game designers have noticed that non-medieval fantasy has potential, and the most popular period seems to be the Victorian age. One example is R. Talsorian's *Castle Falkenstein,* which seems to be based on the 1870s, but which is actually more of a high fantasy game with historical trimmings. There is also *Deadlands,* the short-lived *For Faerie, Queen, & Country* from TSR, the horror-based *Ravenloft/ Gothic Earth* setting for *AD&D,* and the upcoming *Victoriana.* And this period is fun. You can include steampunk technology, theosophical mystics, snazzy military uniforms, gunslingers and the slums of industrial cities.

Technology: Steam-powered transport becomes much more commonplace on land and sea, and heavier-than-air flight is imaginable. It's not surprising to find the foundations of Science Fiction being laid by Jules Verne and H. G. Wells. There's a price for this, though – scenarios have to take into account better transportation and weapons. By the end of the century, you have repeating rifles and machine guns. Instead of lumbering trolls, PCs face steam-powered war machines, or monsters that don't care about bullets.

With modern medicine still evolving, characters should still be nervous of injury and disease, while those firearms aren't quite good enough to stop a determined charge by cavalry or a Zulu-style impi. A pseudo-Victorian world should see a lot of discussion about what technology can accomplish.

Social Organisation: The Victorian age saw deep social divisions, with aristocracies of birth and wealth claiming the right to lord it over the masses. World-wide imperialism gave members of different ethnic groups the chance to feel superior to each other. All of this could be amplified in a fantasy world with multiple non-human races. On the other hand, it was accepted that democracy and legal rights were good ideas – characters who fall foul of the law have some hope of a fair trial, whatever their social status.

This style of setting is also notoriously formal, with emphasis on good manners and correct behaviour. While some players may find this tiresome, others may enjoy the opportunity for roleplaying.

The Supernatural: Most published Victorian-style games have used a traditional set of elves, dwarves and so on, plus maybe some less well-known European fairies. However, it may be worth thinking about variations, for example, a game's Europeans could all be humans, building empires with subject-races who are non-human – savage orcs, effete elves with ancient secrets and so on.

This is also the first historical era where time travel has literary justifications, opening up new possibilities. For a bizarre system of belief, look at the theosophists, with their mystical view of evolution.

Few gamers can resist the idea of magicians as Victorian gentlemen, dressed in tweeds and trawling leather-bound books for spells. Alternatively, mystical secrets might be drawn from distant lands. Or you can have both – the two categories either being rivals or seeking to learn from each other.

Rules to use

If you're going to run a fantasy game with post-medieval technology, you will encounter at least one important question – guns. Many standard fantasy game systems don't cover firearms in any depth. And if your players know much about this topic, you'll need fairly detailed rules. Early-style guns may not be terribly useful – however, even clumsy arquebuses need sensible treatment, and more advanced designs are likely to take over in combat-oriented campaigns.

The other area of combat that needs to be handled properly is fencing. Although a rapier can be subject to much the same rules as a broadsword, a lot of the fun in post-medieval adventure is the swashbuckling sword-play. Ideally, rules should down-play armour, or at least permit the swashbuckler to aim for its weak points, while rewarding fast movement and cleverness.

The generic game system with the most detailed treatment of black powder weapons is *GURPS* – look out for the *GURPS High Tech* supplement. *GURPS* also has detailed rules for fencing and swashbuckling in some sourcebooks. Other systems can handle such things, but may need a bit more work.

On the non-combat side, it may be worth using a system that permits characters to change careers occasionally, and which gives some thought to social interactions. There's little point in playing in a world of social upheaval if the rules nail your characters down. This is another area where points-based systems such as *GURPS* or *Hero* score over *AD&D.*

Or you can use rules specifically written for this class of setting. *Tales of Gargentihr,* the swashbuckling *Lace and Steel* and *Space: 1889* are all sadly hard to find, but *Castle Falkenstein* is still available and pays a lot of attention to swashbuckling sword-play and firearms.

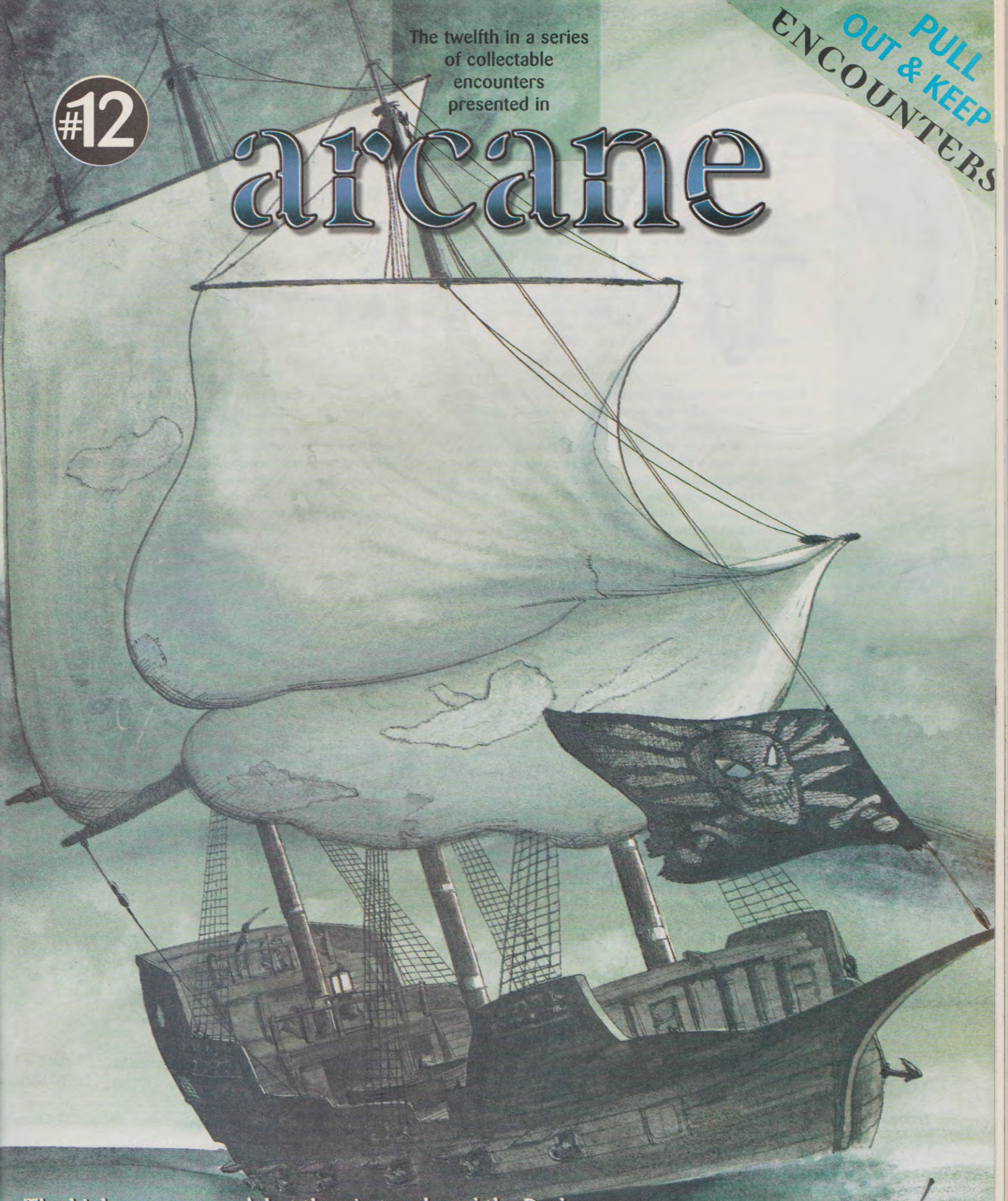
Next month, we tackle the idea of combining fantasy and modernity – or even futurity...

#12

The twelfth in a series of collectable encounters presented in

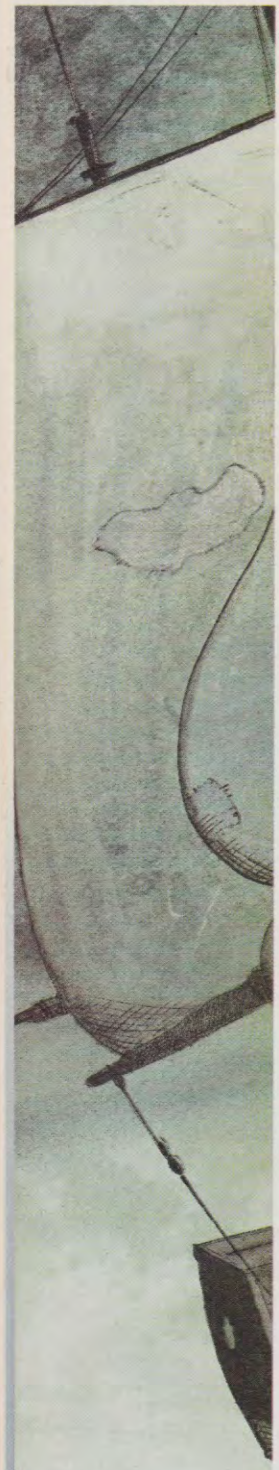
arcane

PULL OUT & KEEP ENCOUNTERS



The high seas are cruel, but the pirates aboard the Dark Jamboree are more so. As you are soon to discover...

by Ken and Jo Walton



arcane *proudly presents another scandalous 11-page encounter for any seafaring adventure.*

The Pirate Ship

We were 20 days out from Newport when the strange black vessel came into sight. "What colours is she flying?" called the first mate. The man in the crow's nest called down that he couldn't make them out. We passengers made nothing of this. We had met ships before and hailed them, calling out that we were the Dandelion out of Newport, and asking them their names and home ports. It wasn't until Captain Flanders suggested the ladies might want to go below that we began to wonder. "What's the matter, sir?" I asked. "This part of the sea is notorious for pirates," the captain said, a resolute expression in his steely eyes. "That sail has good line and looks mighty fast. She might be an innocent vessel, or she might be a danger. If we have to fight we will, and you need have no fear, but blood's an ugly sight, even if it's the blood of murderous pirates." We stayed on deck, adding pistols to the rapiers we wore when the captain broke out the arms.

The strange ship bore straight towards us, and she was still flying no identifying flag. We made the best time we could, but although we had our sails spread we could not hope to outrun her. At last she ran up a flag. I was looking through the spy-glass at the time, and knew her true colours as soon as any man on the ship. The flag was black, with a device of a skull and crossbones. It was the Jolly Roger, demanding our surrender. At the same time I saw her name, the Dark Jamboree. In answer, brave Captain Flanders fired a broadside at the pirates. I believe it did some damage, but it was hard to tell, for they also fired, and in the smoke and confusion it was hard to be sure exactly what was going on.

All too soon the pirate closed with us, and the rascals began to grapple the Dandelion and swing across to the decks. It was a terrifying crew. The first to swing on to our deck was a huge squint-eyed man, almost as broad as he was round, with an orcish cast to his features. Others of the crew were orcs beyond any doubt, and fought with curved and serrated orcish knives. Many, both orc and human, were missing limbs, eyes or other body parts, and had patched themselves with makeshift replacements of wood, metal or cloth. All in all their appearance was fearsome, but the most daunting of all was their captain, a tall woman with flinty eyes, a pair of pistols and burning fuses braided into her hair. The captain and crew of the Dandelion and our own party fought valiantly and much blood was spilled on both sides, before we heard the blood-chilling cry, "Will you surrender or will you walk the plank?"

Any sea on any world can be the haunt of pirates, amoral scum who delight in taking innocent ships and making their prisoners walk the plank. These villains can make any sea voyage more exciting, or even scupper it altogether. Pirates are always short of recruits, and almost always give their prisoners the chance of joining them. What begins as a peaceful sea voyage can end with the PCs themselves running up the Jolly Roger. Pirates can also be heroes. In times when seamen are treated very harshly and the punishment for mutiny is death, people who take the ship for themselves and try to make a life on the waves cannot always be blamed. Also, in times of war, many otherwise respectable vessels would be given letters of marque allowing them to prey on the shipping of enemy nations. These ships prefer to be known as privateers rather than pirates, but the way they operate is very similar.

The System

You'll notice that, even though we present character descriptions for the people who inhabit the ship, we don't provide you with any stats. That's a deliberate decision – you're supposed to be able to use this encounter with pretty well any seafaring adventure, and to provide stats for all of them would take up way too much space. That shouldn't be a problem for you – just make up the stats for these characters yourself, using the descriptions as a starting point. Same goes for other 'system' details – make them up to fit your campaign.

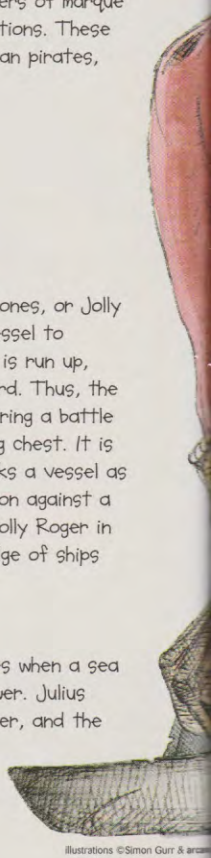
The Ship

The Skull and Crossbones

The traditional pirate's flag, the skull and crossbones, or Jolly Roger, is actually a flag run up asking another vessel to surrender. If the ship does not comply a red flag is run up, meaning that no quarter will be given to any aboard. Thus, the Jolly Roger can be flown by a legitimate vessel during a battle and can be stored with the other flags in the flag chest. It is only flying it as constant identification which marks a vessel as a pirate. This fact can be used to create suspicion against a legitimate vessel if a landlubber party finds the Jolly Roger in the chest. Any PC who has a respectable knowledge of ships should be aware of this.

Historical Pirates

Pirates have been a danger to shipping at all times when a sea is not under the direct control of one strong power. Julius Caesar was captured by pirates early in his career, and the South China Sea is still a notorious haunt of pirates even today. The golden age of piracy



Illustrations ©Simon Gurr & arcane

was in the Caribbean in the 16th and 17th centuries. In this period, during which there was intermittent war between England, France, Spain and the Netherlands, letters of marque could always be had. Sir Francis Drake spent time as a Caribbean pirate, and this was the age of such famous pirates as Captain Teach 'Blackbeard', Captain Morgan, Anne Bonney and Captain Kidd.

Buried Treasure

If pirates manage to take a prize, they get rich. Often they hide these riches, sometimes from their own shipmates and often from other pirates. Pirates are just as vulnerable to attack by other pirates as anyone else. So often treasure is cached in some safe place for later. Traditionally, it is buried in a sea chest on a deserted island, with a map pointing to its location.

Letters of Marque

Letters of marque are official documents granting a private ship military status in times of war and the right to attack enemy vessels in international water. All privateers carry these letters, from one country, making their piracy on vessels of another country legal. Only attacks without these letters are actually considered piracy. To obtain letters of marque a ship needs to belong to the nation issuing them, or at least to a friendly or allied nation. Ships carrying letters of marque from more than one nation are considered pirates. Letters of marque can be granted only to respectable ships in good standing, except in an emergency situation when any ship might be given one.

Pirates' Agreement

Many pirate ships have a pirates' agreement, like a ship's articles, or like the oath and rules of a secret society, which all crew members have to read (or have read to them) and sign. This sets out what is and is not allowed aboard, what rights the crew have and how booty will be shared out among them. All new crew members are asked to sign the agreement.

Joining a Pirate Ship

New recruits on any ship are subjected to hazing. This can involve being made to do all the worst jobs – scrubbing decks, pumping out the bilges, tarring ropes and so on. It might also include washing and mending other sailor's clothes and helping in the galley. On a pirate ship it might get rougher, as the mettle of a new recruit is tested – being thrown into the bilges, being made to walk the plank blindfolded as a prank, wrestling one of the crew or being sent aloft to change sails alone.

Discipline and Mutiny

On any legitimate vessel, the captain has all powers while at sea, and can even hang seamen for severe offences. Discipline for ordinary seamen is very harsh, and floggings and keelhaulings are common. Officers expect every order to be obeyed promptly and efficiently. They rely on their authority to enforce discipline and cannot risk any leniency in case the crew realise that they are in the majority. When the crewmen do realise this and mutiny, they can take over any ship as long as they are in agreement. However, they are then limited as to what they can do. They can become pirates, or take up a life on a tropical island, but any legitimate civilised port will be closed to them. Punishments for mutiny are inevitably harsh. On pirate ships, floggings and other severe punishments are less common and discipline less tight. Arbitrary killing is more common, however.

Keelhauling

This horrific practise involves the guilty party being tied to ropes and dragged under the ship, scraping the barnacles on the bottom. If they don't die of drowning, or the scrape wounds, death from infection is likely.

Adventure Seeds

The Indomitable

Pirate ships may come into legitimate ports and appear to be innocent. Recently, a lot of shipping has gone missing. A ship which regularly trades with the main port, The Indomitable seems to be trading some of the stuff from the missing ships. The government has employed the PCs to join the crew of the ship and find out if it is a pirate ship. They have to sound out the crew and if possible organise a mutiny to recapture the ship.

The Fearless

The Fearless is an elven privateer, known for the ruthlessness with which human prisoners are treated. She is also known for her fabulous wealth which the captain, in defiance of usual pirate custom, keeps aboard her. Now she has been badly crippled in a fight, and is trapped in a bay, with a load of treasure aboard. Can the PCs get letters of marque permitting them to attack her, and get back before she slips away?

Vengeful Pirates

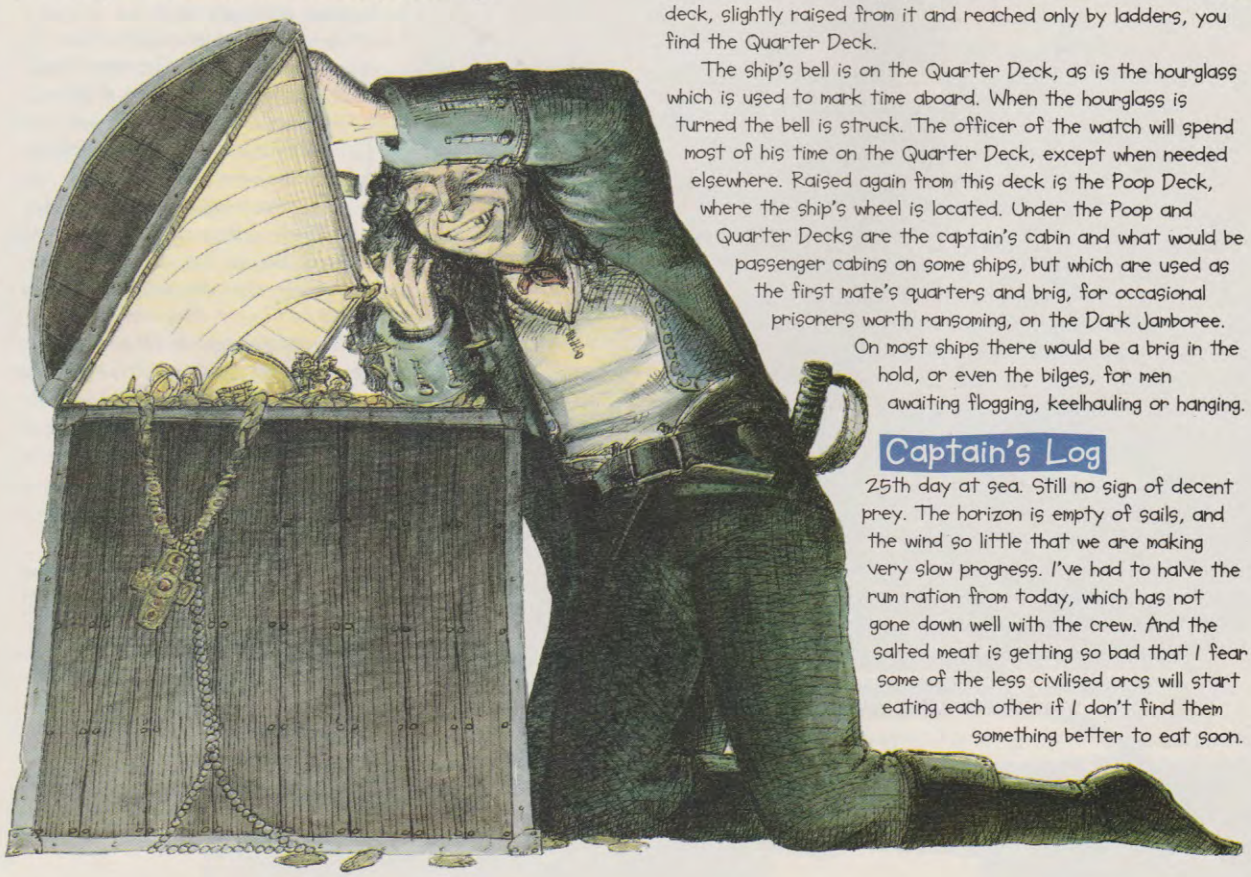
They never forget a wrong. A party which escapes from a pirate ship will be hunted down ruthlessly. A stranger approaches a group of PCs in a port inn, maybe the Golden Dragon (see **arcane** 2), begging for passage out of town and offering to pay extremely well. It is not until too late that they find this man was once the first mate aboard Vengeful. The orcish captain Masha and her fierce crew of desperados are still aboard, and have sworn that their ship's name is no idle boast – they will hunt the mate down wherever he hides, and won't stop until he is found.

The Pirate Frigate Dark Jamboree

The Dark Jamboree is a frigate with a crew of 150. She carries cargo which has been stolen from other ships. She has a secret home port in the islands at Eyes Cove, but she claims to be registered at Newport. She is a typical frigate, with four decks. Lowest are the bilges, where stones are kept for ballast. The bilges are usually awash with foul smelling green water, which has seeped in through the cracks – this is not dangerous except in a really bad storm. Above the bilges is the hold, where cargo can be stored. In the Dark Jamboree's case this can be anything at all, from the most innocuous to the most terrifying goods imaginable. Stores are also kept in the hold – barrels of rum, salt pork, water etc. Above the hold is the gun deck, where the cannons poke from the sides of the ship. The Dark Jamboree has 12 cannons, six on each side. The sailors sleep in the gun deck, from hammocks slung from the ceiling.

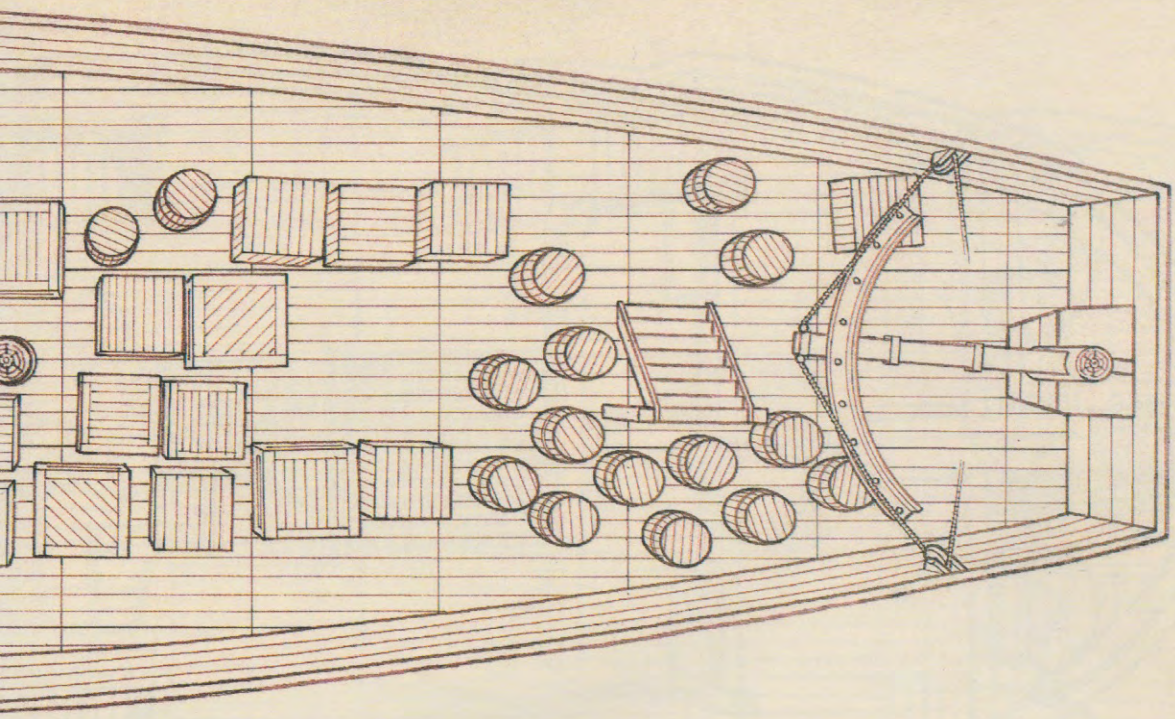
The surface 'outdoor' portion of the ship consists of a series of decks. The main deck is the lowest, where the ship's boat is stored and the hatches leading below are located. At the front of the main deck is the foc'sle (forecastle) where the petty officers sleep, and the galley, where all food aboard is prepared. The ordinary sailors are never allowed to go behind the main mast except by special orders. At the back of the main deck, slightly raised from it and reached only by ladders, you find the Quarter Deck.

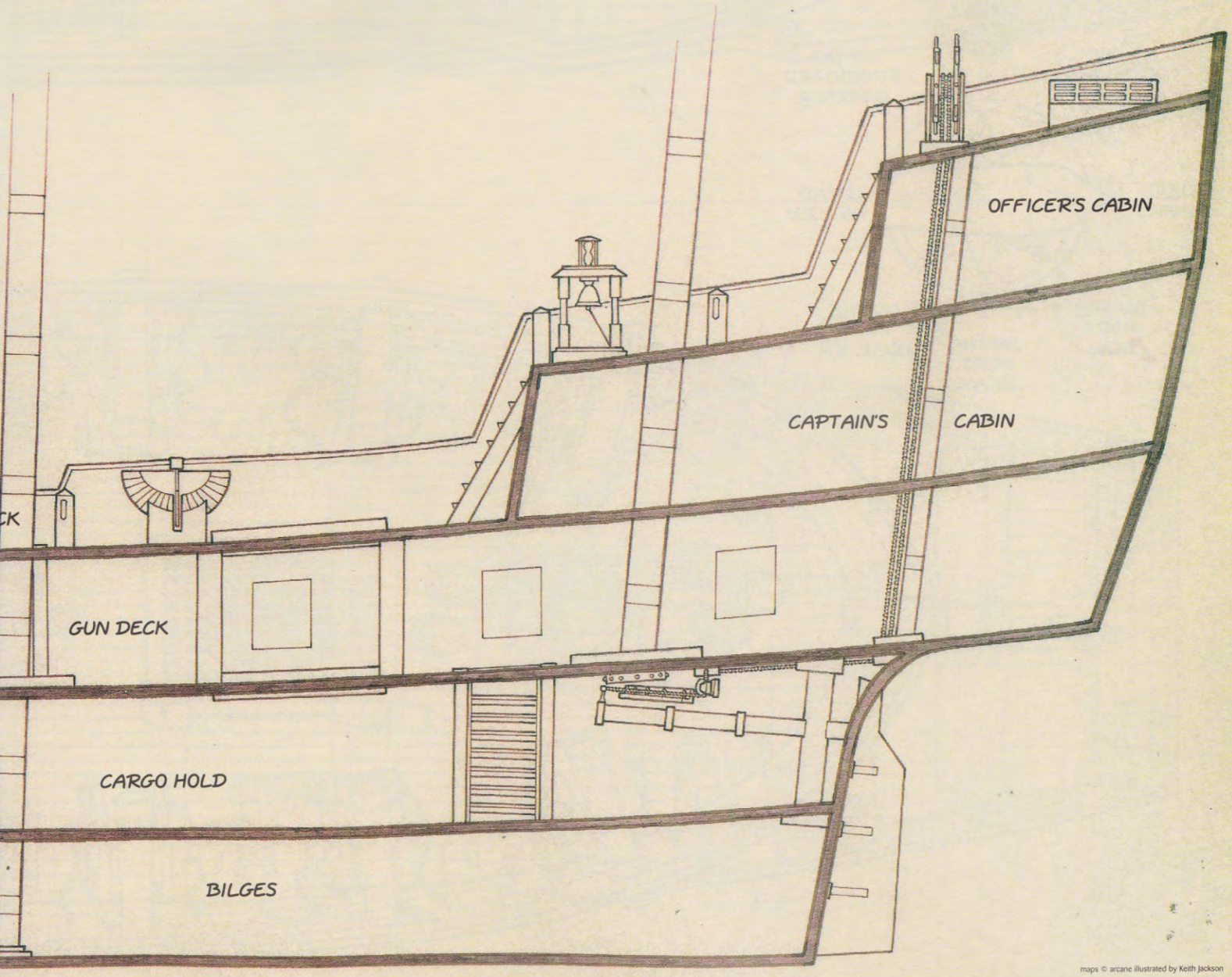
The ship's bell is on the Quarter Deck, as is the hourglass which is used to mark time aboard. When the hourglass is turned the bell is struck. The officer of the watch will spend most of his time on the Quarter Deck, except when needed elsewhere. Raised again from this deck is the Poop Deck, where the ship's wheel is located. Under the Poop and Quarter Decks are the captain's cabin and what would be passenger cabins on some ships, but which are used as the first mate's quarters and brig, for occasional prisoners worth ransoming, on the Dark Jamboree. On most ships there would be a brig in the hold, or even the bilges, for men awaiting flogging, keelhauling or hanging.



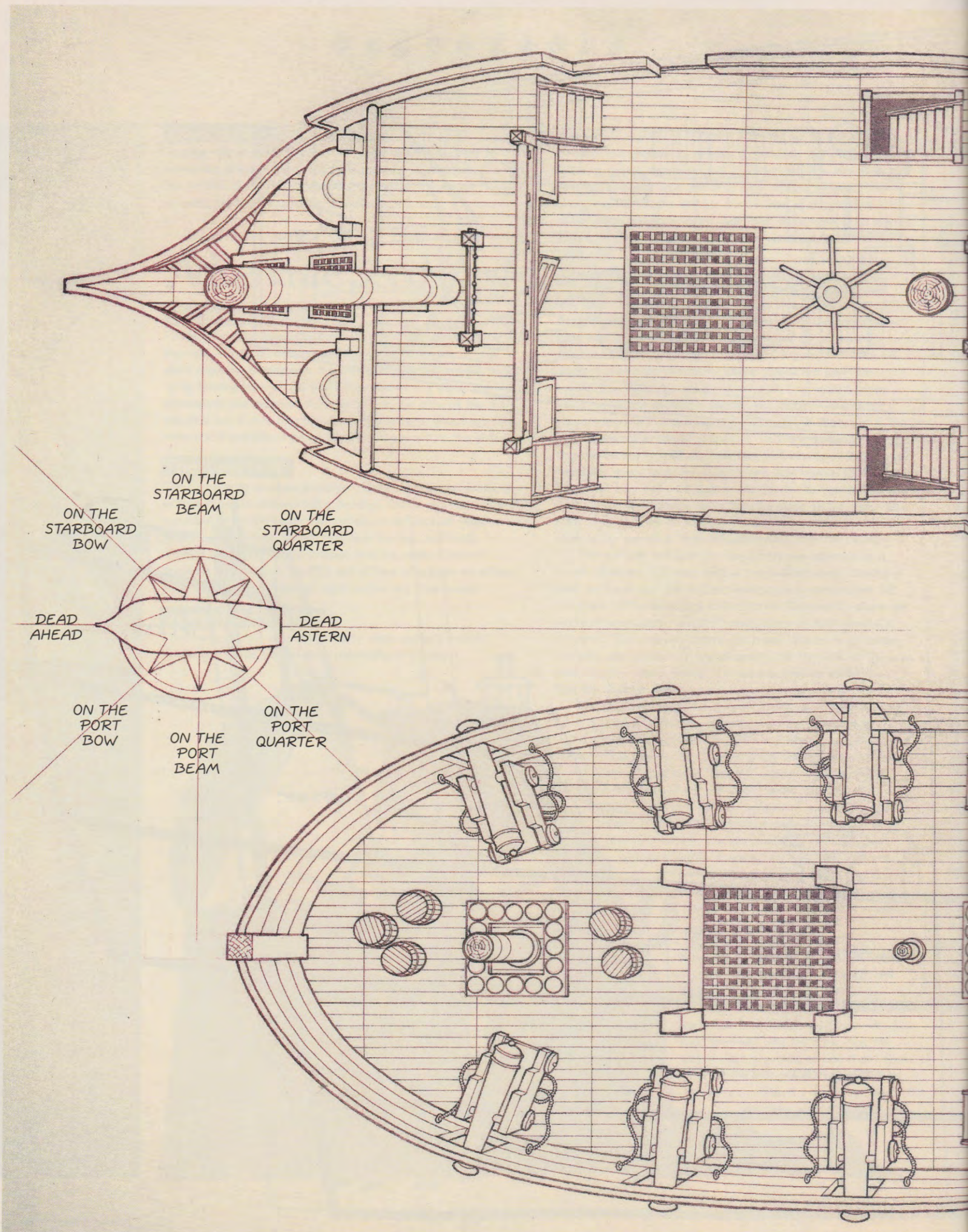
Captain's Log

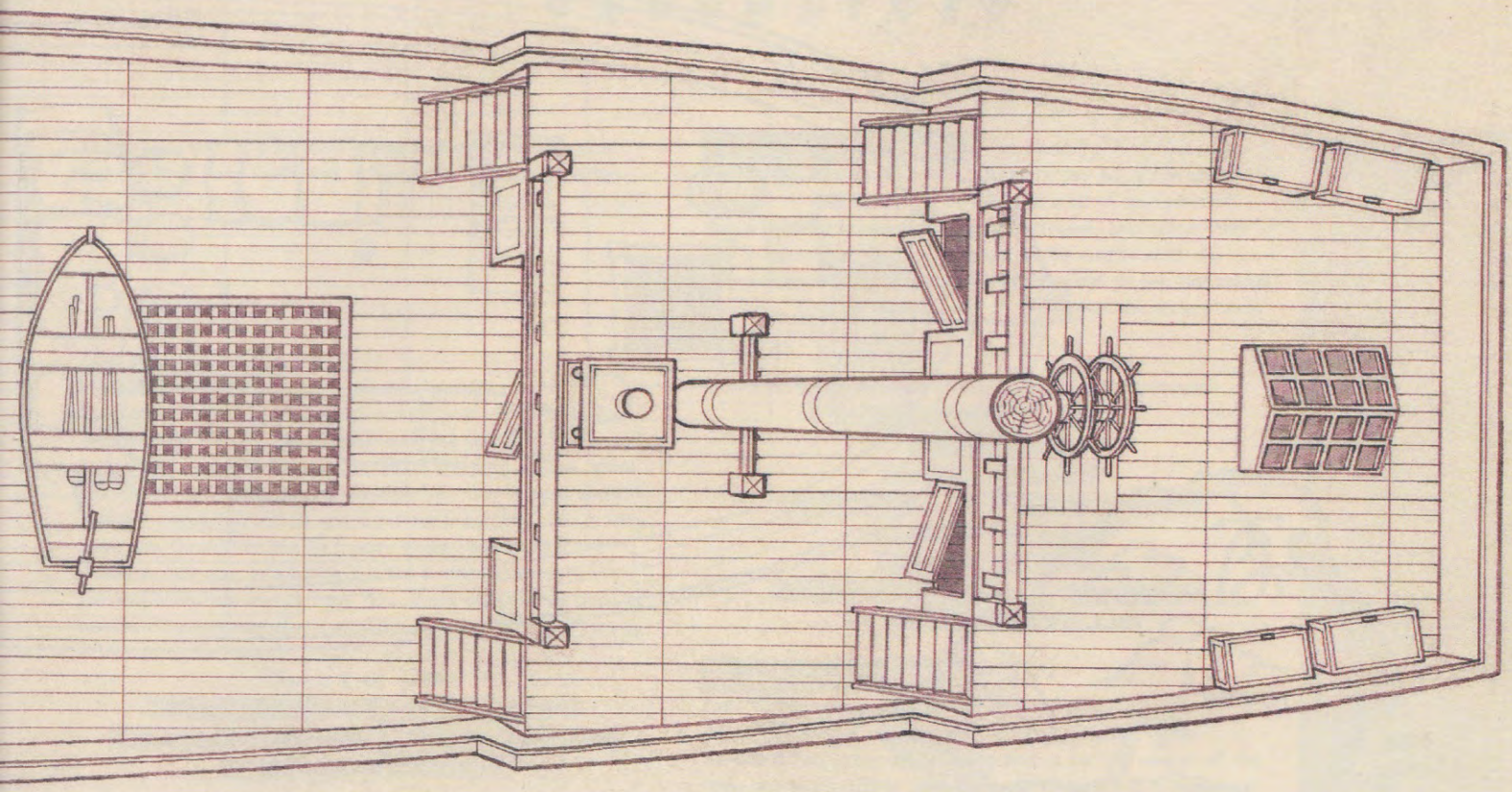
25th day at sea. Still no sign of decent prey. The horizon is empty of sails, and the wind so little that we are making very slow progress. I've had to halve the rum ration from today, which has not gone down well with the crew. And the salted meat is getting so bad that I fear some of the less civilised orcs will start eating each other if I don't find them something better to eat soon.

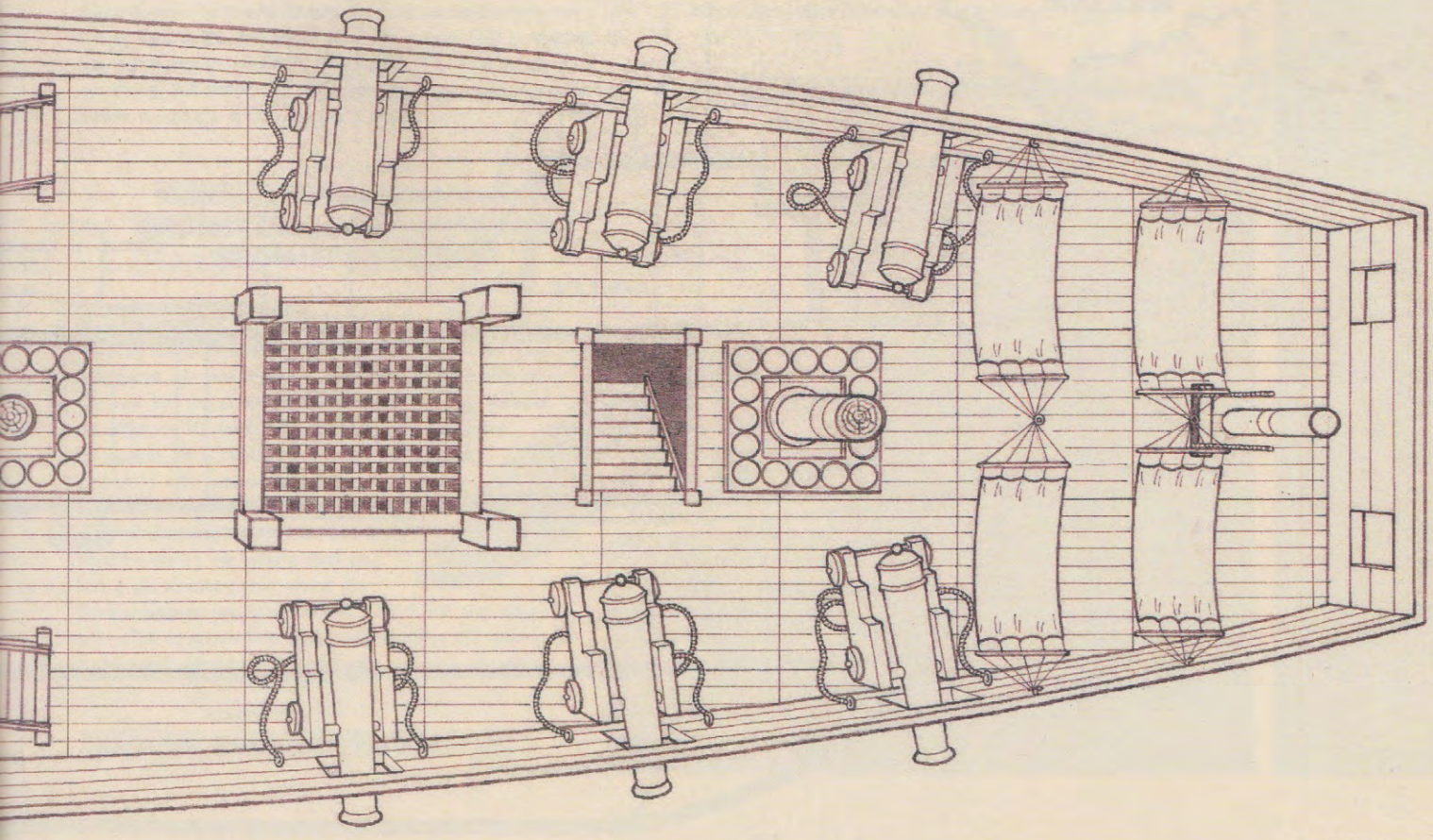




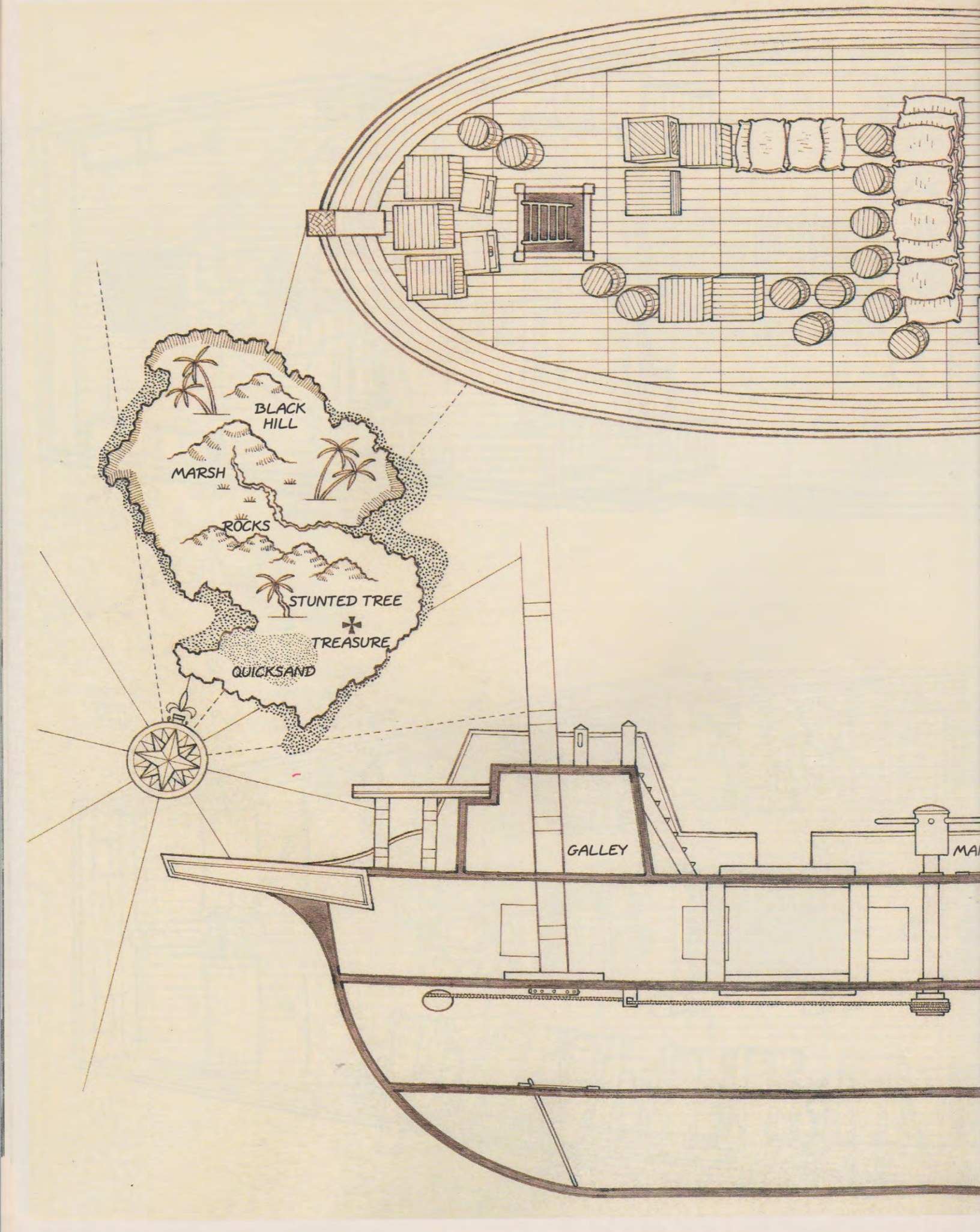
maps © arcane illustrated by Keith Jackson


ON THE STARBOARD BEAM
ON THE STARBOARD BOW
ON THE STARBOARD QUARTER
DEAD AHEAD
DEAD ASTERN
ON THE PORT BOW
ON THE PORT BEAM
ON THE PORT QUARTER





maps © arcane illustrated by Keith Jackson


BLACK HILL
MARSH
ROCKS
STUNTED TREE
TREASURE
QUICKSAND
GALLEY

Things have been a great deal calmer on board the ship since I had the first mate keelhauled – there'll be less talk of mutiny from now on, I think.

People

Captain Eyes

Eyes is a pirate, and has been for many years. She sails all seas, and attacks all vessels whenever she suspects there may be a profit. She also engages in coastal smuggling in some areas. She is tall, with flinty, expressionless eyes, and is aged about 40. She keeps two pistols and a cutlass in her belt, and is very good with them. Over the last year, whenever the Dark Jamboree has gone into battle she has braided slow fuses into her long black hair and lit them, then stood dangerously close to barrels of gunpowder. Her crew admire her for her ruthlessness.

Captain Eyes' quotes:

"Will you join me, or will you walk the plank?"

"I honestly don't care if I live or die. If you want to live, put your weapons down, now."

First Mate Jelsee

Jelsee's mother was an orc, but if you say so he'll squeeze the life out of you. He's almost as tall as a man, and half as strong again, and he looks exactly like you'd expect a half orc to look. He's of normal intelligence for a pirate, and he loves the Dark Jamboree and Captain Eyes. He feels an affectionate fondness for the crew, though they'd never know it. He feels the ship is the only home he's ever known. Growing up neither orc nor human, this is the only place where he's ever felt he belongs. He has a fine line in invective, and curses the crew on all occasions, but rarely has to resort to physical violence. He can handle a cutlass, a cannon and a pistol.

Jelsee's quote:

"Come here you greedy varmints, you noodle-pated numbskulls, you salmon-faced simpletons, you feeble excuses for seamen."

Gunner Kambori

Kambori comes from the islands where the pirates have their hideaways. He was originally brought on to the ship as a servant for the cook, but he worked hard and showed an aptitude for mechanics, and has been promoted to gunner. He is beautiful, and a great favourite with women, both among the pirates and on shore. He is also quick witted and good at fast-talking people into doing what he wants. He boasts that he has a girl in every port where the Dark Jamboree has ever docked, and if the ship makes a landfall at a new location, Kambori will be off looking for a conquest, whatever the captain's orders may say.

Kambori's quote:

"You're as pretty as a captain's daughter."

The Parrot: Polly

Polly is the pirate's foulmouthed parrot. She will sit on anyone's shoulder as long as they bribe her with a bit of ship's biscuit. She is brightly coloured and has an extremely loud voice. Polly has an open cage swinging from one of the masts, which she occasionally uses to sleep in. She spends most of her time among the crew. There is much debate as to whether she understands what she is saying or not.

Polly's quotes (some of her more repeatable phrases):

"Who's a pretty girl, then!"

"Pieces of eight!"

"Blood and diamonds!"

"Kill 'em all! Spread out their guts in the sun!"

"Run up the Jolly Roger!"

"Splice the main brace!"

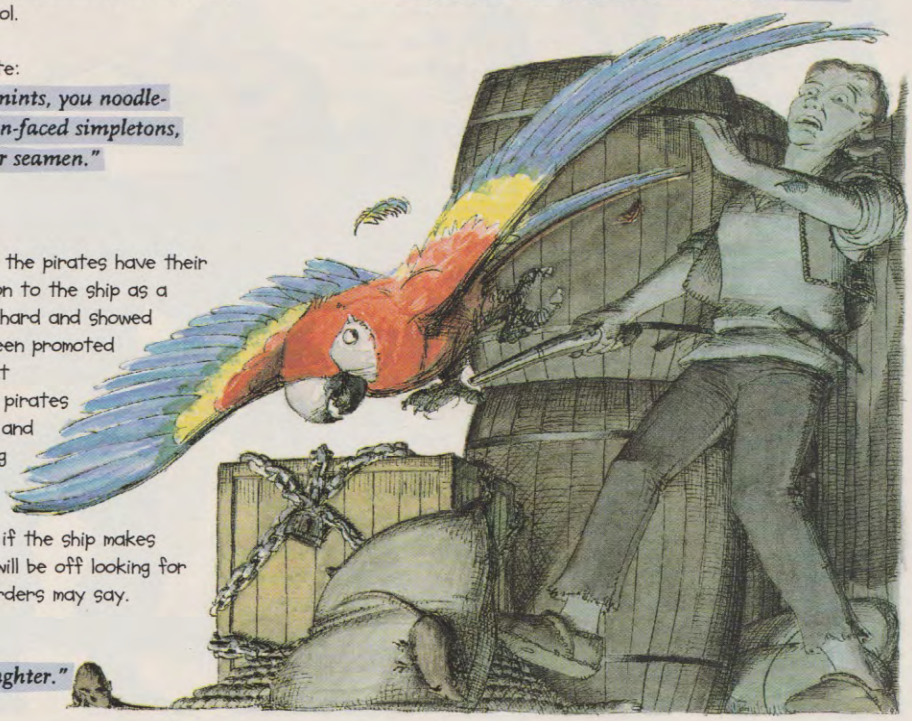
"It's under the palm, ten yards to the left of the rock like a dragon."

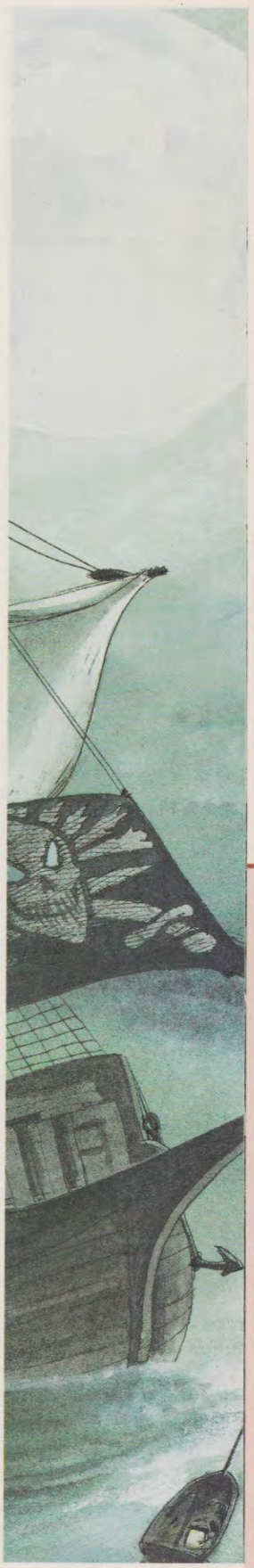
Midshipman Torres

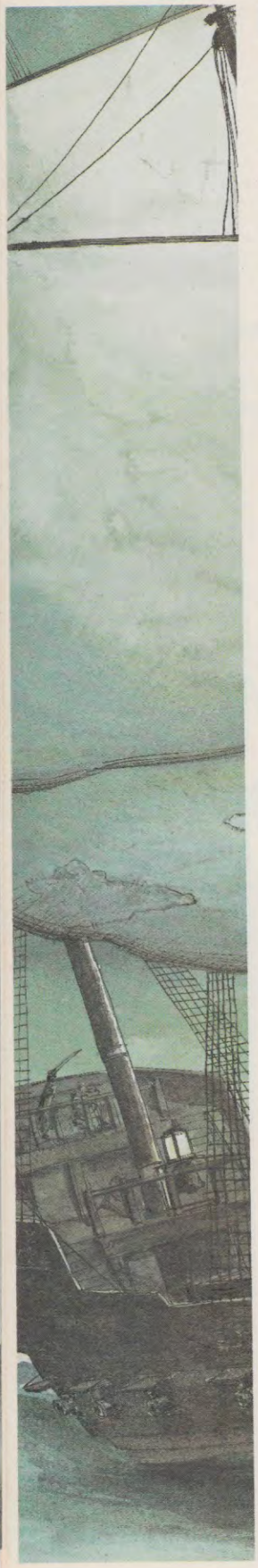
Carl Torres appears to be a fine, upstanding midshipman of about 15 years of age. He was captured from the vessel Tarteline two years ago, and has been a faithful member of the crew and ship's officer ever since. He is good with a pistol and also a fencing sword. He keeps strict discipline on Eyes' behalf, and administers the occasional floggings. He will ask any new arrival if he has ever met his brother, Charles Torres. His search for his brother leads him to visit every new ship the Dark Jamboree encounters. In fact, Carl Torres is a girl in disguise. Her real name is Kathy Manta. Her 'brother' is actually her lover, who disappeared on a voyage four years ago. She is actually 19, but pretends to be younger to disguise her lack of beard. Her present location is a mystery.

Carl's quote:

"Have you ever met a man called Charles Torres?"







The Cabin-boy: Cow-Eyes

Cow, or Cow-Eyes, is a boy of about 12. He is agile and nimble, and can shin up ropes or masts faster than any other member of the crew. He is also very bright, and speaks three or four languages. He is not very strong, however, partly because of his age, and partly because of his wiry build. He has webbed fingers and toes, and very large brown eyes, which earned him his name. Some people say that his mother was a mermaid, or a siren. Unusually for a sailor, he has the ability to swim, which gives some credence to the suggestion. Many sailors are superstitious about learning to swim, thinking it will cause them to drown. Cow enjoys swimming, and will do it at any safe opportunity. He is the person who is always sent down to rescue anyone who falls overboard. He was born on a pirate island and has never known his family. He likes the Dark Jamboree and her crew. He is especially friendly with Midshipman Torres, who is teaching him to fight using a rapier. He will be friendly towards any new crew members, or even prisoners, and may be able to get them included in his lessons. He is always ready to help, but knows no discretion at all.

Cow-Eyes' quotes:

"I've been aboard pirate ships since I was just a little scrap!"

"Would you like me to swim out to the wreck?"

The Cook: Tombarine

Tombarine is a huge orc, very broad shouldered and with very long arms. Some people say she must have human blood, but not in her earshot. She is proud of being an orc, and of orcish culture. She despises humans. Tombarine has one eye, one hand and a hot temper. The empty eye socket is covered with a traditional black patch, but the hand has been replaced with a most unusual wooden spoon. She spends most of her time cooking in the galley. She is a good cook, in the orcish style of bland, overcooked, undersalted food. She is very good at eking out supplies, and it is her job to make the provisions aboard the ship last until the Dark Jamboree comes back into port. A typical meal consists of salt pork and very overcooked brussel sprouts. Tombarine is strong, and her usual weapons are a ladle in her good hand and the sturdy wooden spoon that is her left hand. She will brandish these weapons, dripping from the pans, at any galley helpers who displease her. She has also been known to use them in battle. She is very fond of her grog – rum and hot water. It is her task to heat grog for the crew, and she always samples a little more than she should. Consequently, she sleeps very well.

Tombarine's quotes:

"Not those weevils, the other weevils! Idiot!"

"A little less water in the grog today I think, there's a wind getting up."

Stowaway 1: Barnabas Hotch

Barnabas Hotch is a man of mature years, who wears the remains of a tattered dress coat and ruffled shirt. He stowed away aboard the Dark Jamboree many years ago. He was a gentleman fallen on hard times. He tried to get passage to one of the Colonies, and did not have quite enough money. He thought it would be easy to hide aboard a ship and steal provisions. It was easy, but unfortunately the ship never went anywhere near where he wanted to go. He sleeps in the sail chest, and spends most of his days hiding in the bilges. He lives on fish he catches, and fresh water he steals from the barrels. Some members of the crew know about him and leave him alone because he is harmless, others think he is a ghost. He will never fight but always runs. He knows the ship very well. He is very lonely and quite mad.

Barnabas' quote:

"Are you talking to me! What do you want?"

Stowaway 2: Janie Trudder

Janie slipped aboard the ship at its last landfall. She has brought provisions to last her the length of the trip, and hides in the hold among the casks and barrels, emerging occasionally at night for some air. She wears men's clothing, but unlike Midshipman Torres there is no possibility she might be mistaken for a man. She is strong and healthy, an extremely good shot with a pistol and good with a cutlass. Janie has a hideously pock-marked face, and has stowed away because she wants to reach the pirate islands. She is looking for her family, who were all lost in a pirate attack two years ago – she wants to rescue them, or avenge them. They were emigrating, and she was forced to wait while recovering from smallpox. She knows they are not aboard the Dark Jamboree, but will try to sneak aboard any other pirate vessel encountered to find them, or news of them. What she does not know is that while her father is dead, her mother is now the notorious pirate Wealthy Meg, known for her policy of slaughtering all prisoners and paying large bounties to crew who join her of their own free will in the islands. If Janie is discovered by anyone other than Eyes, she will try to bribe or threaten the discoverers into maintaining her secrecy.

Janie's quote:
"Quiet, or I'll shoot!"

Adventure: Uncle Ned's Buried Treasure

Everyone said that Uncle Ned was a pirate. But when he died far away and his effects were sent back to you, you didn't expect them to contain quite a bit of gold and a faded, folded and bloodstained map of distant Blackwater island, clearly marked with an X and the promise of treasure. What self-respecting hero would not gather a bunch of friends and buy passage for the islands to retrieve the treasure?

Naturally, events do not prove to be such plain sailing. Whatever ship the party takes passage on will be attacked by the notorious Dark Jamboree with her ruthless Captain Eyes. If the crew members have fought well in the attack, Eyes will offer to recruit them into the pirate brotherhood. They will endure the usual rough hazing from her crew. If they reveal their map or their connection with Captain Ned, Eyes will be interested but insist on heading home before making for Blackwater. She will not reveal that she knew Ned. If not she will head home through the islands in any case. The Dark Jamboree is a pirate vessel, and she will take prizes as she encounters them. In this case she encounters a privateer, the Laughing Goblin, and a battle with cannon soon turns into a close-up battle. The PCs should be given chances to distinguish themselves and earn Eyes' gratitude. After this the crew will begin to respect them, as long as they have behaved in a bloodthirsty manner.

If they become friendly with Eyes, and whether or not she knows about Blackwater and their connection with Ned, she will show them her softer side and confide in them about her love affair with their uncle, revealing that she bore his child which he took to safety, but all knowledge of the child's location has been lost. Since his death she hasn't cared about anything, which is why she takes suicidal risks with gunpowder and fuses. If asked about his treasure she will talk about the golden doubloons and ropes of pearls they took together. She'll also let them know about the many enemies he had among the other pirates of the islands.

When they reach Eyes' home base of Eyes Cove, they find it has been captured by the Dread Captain Carandel, an enemy of both Eyes and Ned. It should be possible to recapture it, by infiltrating the base via the secret ways that Eyes knows – the PCs are ideal for this purpose because they are new and Carandel doesn't know them. Carandel, however, killed Ned and will boast about it. If the PCs don't seem on for an infiltration attempt a straight battle should be possible. In any case, Carandel should get a chance to rant and escape.

The conclusion to this adventure should be landing on Blackwater, to win through the quicksand to discover no treasure on the spot marked X, but a cottage where a pair of retired pirates are bringing up Ned and Eyes' daughter. By this time the party may want to take on a ship of their own, which Eyes will give them, or go after Carandel for revenge.

Recommended Reading:

- Henry Dana's *Ten Years Before the Mast* – a fascinating account of life on-board a real sailing ship in the 1840s.
- Tim Powers' *On Stranger Tides* – pirates and voodoo.
- Michael Scott Rohan's *Chase the Morning, Cloud Castles, The Gates of Noon* – pirates, magic, time travel and immortality, all of which would make a great roleplaying setting.

Next Month

Starkmoor Hall is the setting for an eerie tale of vampires and blood-sucking intrigue – see you there on Friday 1st November.

PAY ONLY £2 per issue when you subscribe in a group of five or more

Special Group Subscription offer

Save 33% when you subscribe!

Subscribe right now! Call the Hotline on 01225 822511

1st BIRTHDAY ISSUE!
BOARD THE PIRATES' GALLEON IN OUR 11-PAGE PULL-OUT ENCOUNTER
SHOULD YOU BUY THE AD&D CORE RULES?
arcane
the gaming mag
On the road again
Get your players on the move for some very different campaigns
Gaming heaven
We conjure up the games we'd like to see
STAR WARS
Why the new edition is a force to be reckoned with
the power and the glory
Immerse your characters in political intrigue and bring some mystery into your scenarios!
REVIEWED THIS ISSUE
Blood Dawn • Star Trek CCG • Rod of Seven Parts • Silent Death • Chaos Progenitus • Fritz Leiber's Lankhmar • Six Guns and Sorcery • GURPS Alternate Earths • And lots more...

Are you a member of a group, society, club or just one of a few mates who enjoy roleplaying? If you are then you can subscribe to **arcane** at our special Group Subscription Rate and save heaps of money.

When you subscribe in a group of five people or more you can save 33% off the normal price of **arcane**. This means you only pay £24 each for your subscription – that works out at only £2 per issue! Needless to say, this is the cheapest way to pay for your copy of **arcane**.

Are you already a subscriber?

If you are already a subscriber you can extend your subscription with this offer. All you need to do is get five like-minded individuals who also want to re-subscribe and complete the form below. Remember to indicate on the form that you are extending your subscription, and it will be extended by 12 issues at the special group price.

All members of the group must complete and return a copy of this form. Return all five forms in the same envelope.

Group Subscription Order Form

Personal details

Title ☐ Initials ☐ Surname ☐

Address .....

.....

Postcode ☐ Daytime tel no ☐

European subscribers please quote your EC VAT reg no ☐

With which issue would you like your subscription to start (issue no) ☐

☐ Please **start** my subscription at the Group Subscription Rate ticked below

☐ Please **extend** my subscription at the Group Subscription Rate ticked below.*

* Please quote your subscriber no here ☐

12 issues of arcane

☐ UK £24 ☐ Europe (incl. Eire) £33 ☐ Rest of the World £45

Please choose your method of payment

☐ Cheque (payable to Future Publishing Ltd. We can only accept sterling cheques drawn on a UK bank account.)

☐ Visa ☐ Access/Mastercard

Card no ☐ Expires ☐

Signature ☐ Date ☐

☐ Please tick this box if you would prefer not to receive information on other offers.

UK readers return this coupon by freepost to: **arcane Group Subscriptions**, Future Publishing Ltd, Freepost BS4900, Somerton, Somerset TA11 6BR. **Overseas readers** return this form (postage payable) to: **arcane Group Subscriptions**, Future Publishing Ltd, Cary Court, Somerton, Somerset, UK TA11 6TB.

ARCGS611

WANT TO SUBSCRIBE?

Good, here's how you do it.

If you want to subscribe at the Group Subscription Rate you need to follow a few simple steps...

1. Find five people who want to subscribe or re-subscribe.
2. Photocopy the form on this page five or more times and get everyone in the group to complete their details on the individual forms – name, address, method of payment etc. All the members have to fill in their details on separate forms – only one subscription is permitted for each person.
3. Then indicate on the form whether you are starting or renewing a subscription.
4. Now decide how you want to pay. You have a choice between cheque or credit card.
5. Return all five forms in the same envelope to:

arcane Group Subscriptions, Future Publishing Ltd, Somerton, BS4900, Somerset TA11 6BR. Please write in the top corner of the envelope '**arcane** Group Subscriptions'.

6. Then just sit back and wait for your first copy of **arcane** to arrive on your doorstep. All five copies will be sent to the individual addresses.

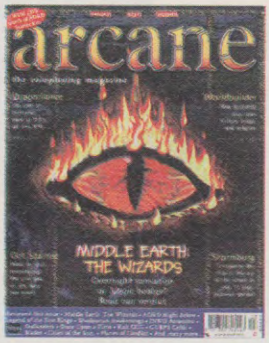
Buy! Buy! Buy!

complete your collection...

Issue 2 explored *AD&D: Skills & Powers*, previewed 1996's big releases, interviewed Richard Garfield (who is *Magic's* inventor) and starred The Golden Dragon Inn, our mammoth 16-page pull-out Encounter.

Issue 3 had a free RPG called *Skool Roolz*, reviewed *Cybergeneration* and *Warhammer Fantasy Battle CD-ROM*, had an article on making characters quirky, and Mr Smith's Trans-dimensional Emporium was the pull-out Encounter.

Issue 7 explored terror in our feature on how to create a horror scenario. It looked at introducing time travel into your games, sent you to Prison in Encounters, poked fun at the way gamers view their dice and reviewed *Conspiracy X*.



Issue 4 explained RPGs for beginners, discussed acting in our games, reviewed *Middle-earth: The Wizards, Legend of the Five Rings* and *Night Below*, while Stormburg, the flying extra-planar city materialised in this issue's Encounter.

Issue 8 suggested ways to introduce some mysticism back into your fantasy games. We also gave you the chance to try out 20 play-by-mail games for free, and we reviewed *Pendragon 4th Edition, Axis Mundi* and *Alliances*.

Issue 11 took a comprehensive look at the cyberpunk genre, reported from GenCon in Milwaukee and took you to the circus in Encounters. We gave you advice on roleplaying insane characters, and reviewed *Fading Suns* and *BattleTech 4th Ed.*

Issue 5 included Richard Garfield's ideas on *Netrunner*, a feature on roleplaying in Japan and reviewed *Vampire: The Dark Ages, Don't Look Back, Mage: The Ascension* and *Heresy*. The Train pulled into this month's Encounter.

Issue 9 showed you how to improve your playing skills. We laughed at refereeing mistakes and explained why soaps can be good for ideas. The Encounter visited RackModulo Inc., and *Wraith: The Oblivion* and *Dragon Storm* were reviewed.

Have your credit card ready and call us on our

HOTLINE 01225 822511

Issue 6 explained why the Christian right wants to ban RPGs, looked at the strange worlds of Steampunk, and reviewed *Netrunner, GURPS Goblins* and *Space Hulk 2nd Edition*. We also gave you a Keep in the Encounter pull-out.

Issue 10 saw the return of *Traveller* with a four-page review and a feature. We went to the *Magic* National Finals, visited The Dig in our pull-out Encounter and also reviewed *The London Guidebook* and *MissionForce: CyberStorm*.

HOW TO ORDER

To order any of these fill in the form below and send it off with your money. Don't be put off if you're an overseas reader – the offer's open to you as well. The back issues cost £4 in Europe and £5 for the rest of the world, which is a bit of a barg'. You can either ring our credit card hotline (you will be billed in your own currency) or fill in the form and enclose an International Money Order, Eurocheque or cheque drawn in sterling.

Back Issues Order Form

Please send me the following:

- ☐ arcane issue 2 @ £3 each
- ☐ arcane issue 3 @ £3 each
- ☐ arcane issue 4 @ £3 each
- ☐ arcane issue 5 @ £3 each
- ☐ arcane issue 6 @ £3 each
- ☐ arcane issue 7 @ £3 each
- ☐ arcane issue 8 @ £3 each
- ☐ arcane issue 9 @ £3 each
- ☐ arcane issue 10 @ £3 each
- ☐ arcane issue 11 @ £3 each

Total cost £

Method of payment

☐ Cheque (payable to Future Publishing Ltd. We can only accept sterling cheques drawn on a UK bank account.)

☐ Visa ☐ Access/Mastercard

Expiry date

Card no

Date

Signature

Please quote your EC VAT reg no

☐ Please tick this box if you would prefer not to receive information on other offers or new products.

Return the form (no stamp required within in the UK) to: **arcane** Subscriptions, Future Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST BS4900, Somerton, Somerset TA11 6BR

ARCMAG11/96

th
soe

There are strange things in ou

American Presidential Campaign Material

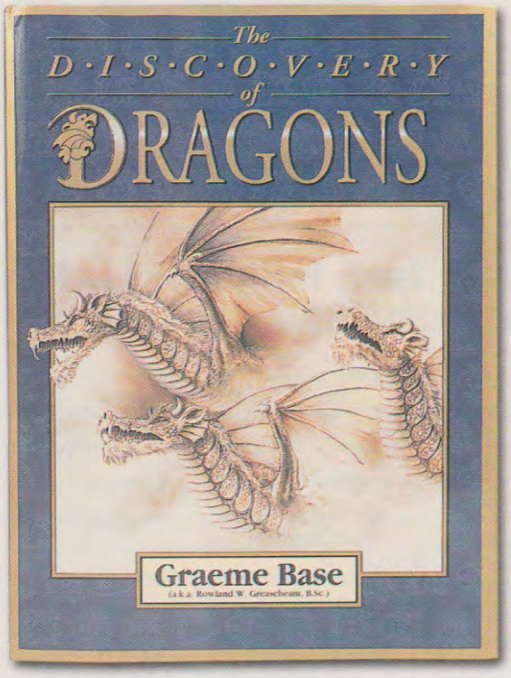
An ancient evil is hell-bent on the destruction of everything. It has been dormant in its lair, but awakes to achieve its ends. First, it will seek the power of the Whitehouse in the forthcoming US presidential elections, in which Cthulhu will also be running as an independent candidate.

Supplied by Chaosium, available from the folks there on 001 510 547 7681 – £12.95.

The Snows of Olympus

Wacko *Vistapro* images of what Mars will look like when we've colonized it – though apparently, we're not going to now, because Bill Clinton doesn't want to. Cthulhu might be more inclined.

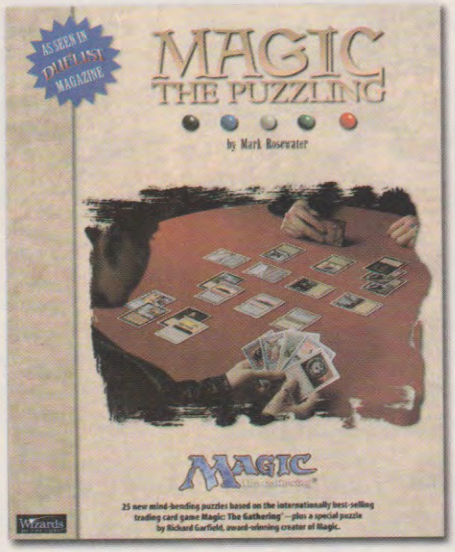
Published by Victor Gollancz, available from all good book stores – £12.99.



The Discovery of Dragons by Graeme Base, aka Rowland W Greasebeam, BSc

A rather strange book, by a rather strange man who draws animals for a living. This book is part of his dragon portfolio.

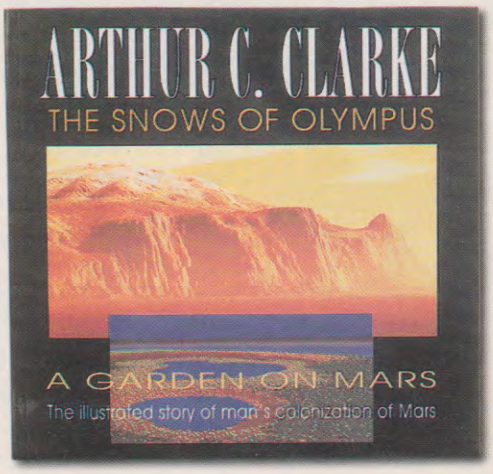
Published by Michael Joseph, available from all good book stores – £12.



Magic: The Puzzling

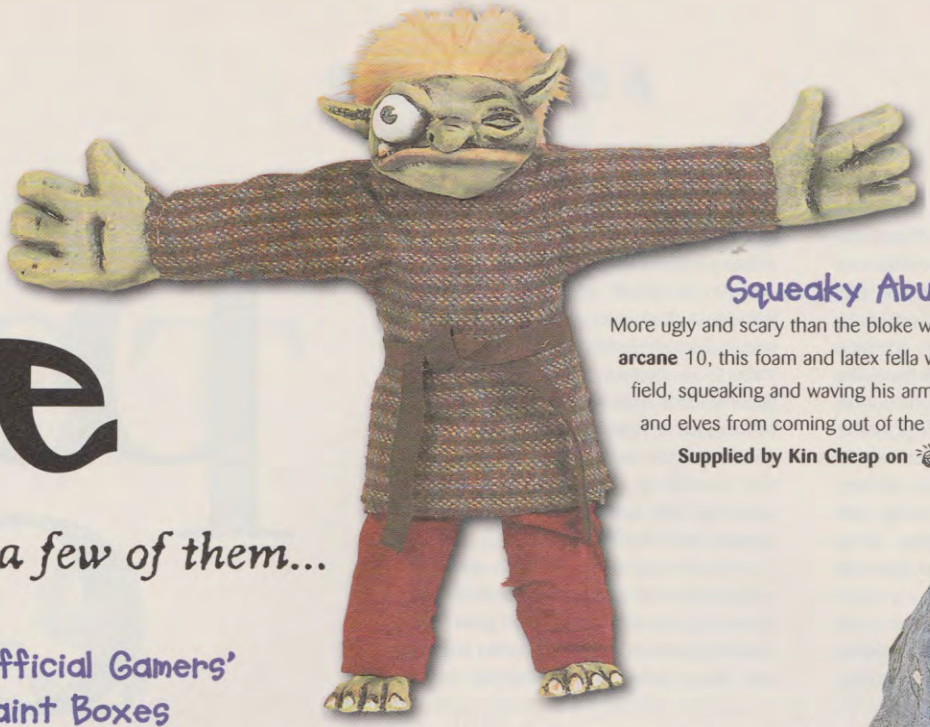
Bridge and chess players puzzle over the game problems published in newspapers. *Magic* players read *The Duellist* for such brain-ticklers. This is a compilation of 25 new *Magic: The Gathering* problems, plus an extra fiendish one by the game's inventor, Richard Garfield.

Published by Wizards of the Coast, available from all good gaming and book stores – £9.99.



ne
urce

ffice. Here are a few of them...



Squeaky Abuse Goblin

More ugly and scary than the bloke we featured in our competition in **arcane** 10, this foam and latex fella will delight in bouncing around a field, squeaking and waving his arms about to stop the nice faeries and elves from coming out of the woods. What a nasty little man.

Supplied by Kin Cheap on 0115 947 4440 – £40.

Official Gamers' Paint Boxes

The Basic, Advanced and Expert sets. The only difference is the colours you get. Primaries for beginners and the full-on Vincent Van Gogh for all you dab-hands out there.

Supplied by Hobby Games, available from all good gaming stores, or call 01903 730998 – £5.70 each.

Troll mask

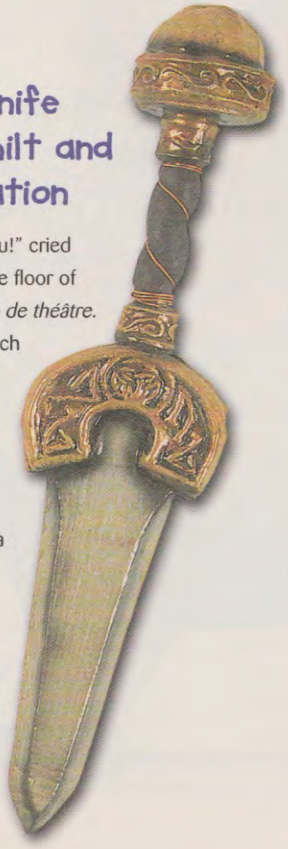
A frightening, blue troll mask sculpted by Richard Dawson. Don't wear it round here, though. We hate trolls, us.

Supplied by Kin Cheap, available from the folks there on 0115 947 4440 – £15.

Dragonskin Deck Portfolio

It's a shame that we continue to slaughter endangered creatures for their hides. This disrespectful vanity threatens to drive some species to extinction.

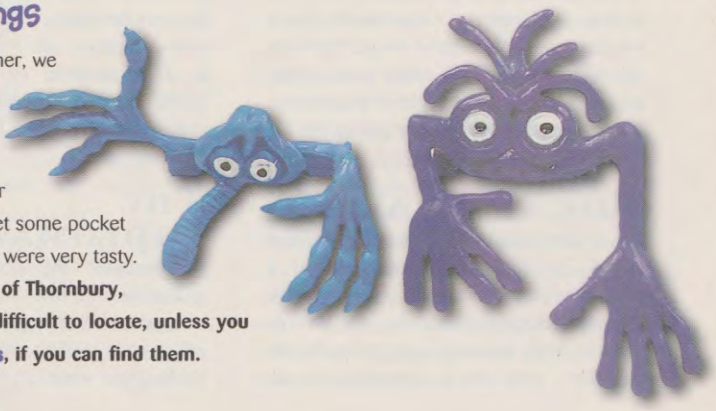
Supplied by Chessex, available from all good gaming stores – £7.



Ornate Celtic Knife with horseshoe hilt and knotwork decoration

"There's French fraternity for you!" cried Burke, casting a dagger on to the floor of the House in an attempted *coup de théâtre*. "Such is the weapon which French Jacobins would plunge into the heart of our beloved king!" To which Sheridan then remarked, "The gentleman, I see, has brought his knife with him, but where is his fork?" This caused a hilarious roar, but you probably had to be there to really appreciate the funny side of it.

Supplied by the folks at Kin Cheap, available from them on 0115 947 4440 – £17.



Pocket snotlings

Way back before the summer, we asked you, the readers, to donate all your gaming gear to The Source. By and large, you didn't fall for that old ruse, but we did get some pocket snotlings. Thank you. They were very tasty.

Supplied by Will Hancock of Thornbury, Bristol. Generally rather difficult to locate, unless you know Will – mere pennies, if you can find them.

PAT GA

Jonathan Smith present
in RPGs, and reveals unr

"Order! Order!" There's no escaping the confrontations, arguments and the need for a referee to control the inevitable verbal violence that will enliven a good gaming session. Historical enmities between you and your friends are bound to re-surface during a campaign. Long-buried hatchets will be frantically dug up and swung in the face of opponents as you desperately try to get your own way. Heated debates over what to do or which way to go will require the referee to assume the David Dimbleby (or Betty Boothroyd) position in an attempt to ensure fair play.

These confrontations offer a tasty subtext to the actual game at hand. Some players will be keen to enter into snidey, conspiratorial alliances which will cause those left out to feel bitter and twisted. Other players will prefer to go it alone, but all players will inevitably be influenced by one important factor – politics.

"Heated debates over what to do will require the referee to assume the David Dimbleby (or Betty Boothroyd) position."

The decisions players make and the arguments they start are all influenced by life outside the roleplaying environment. Take two friends – one with a well-paid job, the other a financially destitute student. How the student would love to see his friend's RPG character struggling with money. On the other hand, what delight his employed friend would take in out-witting his supposedly learned companion during a game. The reversals of fortune that can occur during RPGs cause all manner of entertaining political friction between players.

But how do you assess the political persuasion of a gaming friend? It's not just a case of asking them who they voted for at the last election. Even if they voted Labour, say, there's no reason why they should act the socialist during an RPG. Games allow people to reveal their alter-egos, dimensions of their personalities not revealed out there in that place called the real world. So, if you're unsure how to strike the Achilles heel of a fellow gamesplayer who's been getting on your nerves, here are a few things to look out for which should enable you to tell the Portillos from the Prescotts.

The Capitalist

He will always look out for number one, and will do so blatantly. The capitalist is a passionate player who wears his heart on his sleeve and despises those who say, 'it's only a game'. RPGs are never only games to the capitalist – they offer an irresistible chance to display a show of strength, to dominate and to patronise the weak.

As a result, the capitalist is a notoriously bad loser. Defeat is taken as a personal insult. Indeed, if he makes a bad start to a campaign, or his character becomes embarrassingly weak, the capitalist will suggest a re-start. If the other players don't agree the capitalist will insist on a re-start, reminding everyone that he was the only one who had the money to buy the game in the first place.

Conversely, the capitalist is absolutely unbearable when he wins, and unfortunately he wins frequently. He will take great joy in reminding others of his successful exploits, and may even go so far as telling unimpressed friends and family of his RPG successes. Such is the nature of the beast.

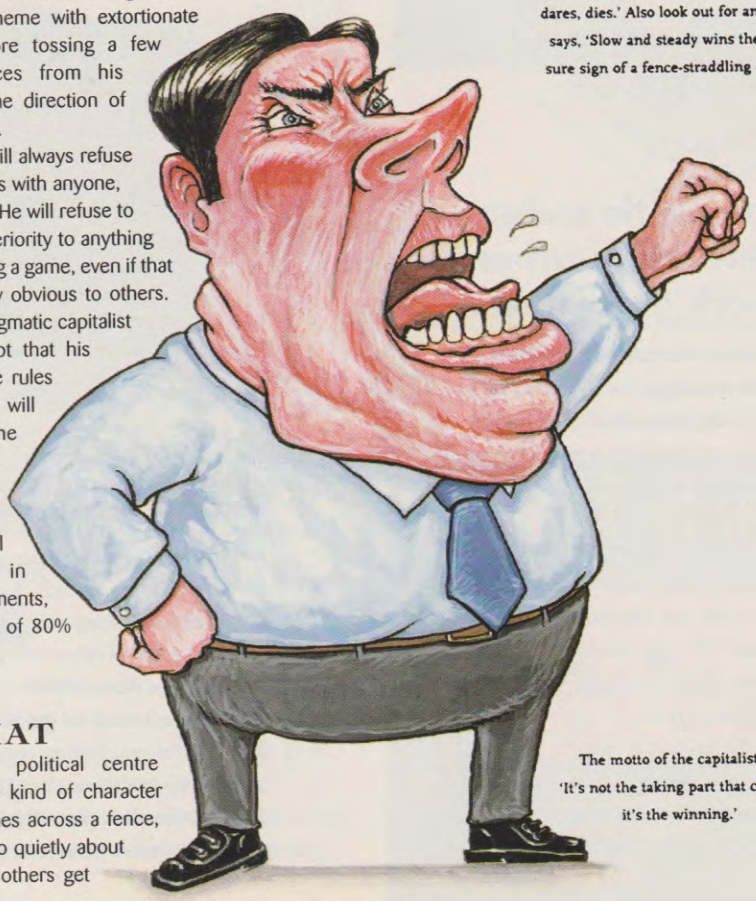
Naturally, the capitalist has a vested interest in maintaining a leading role within any game, and will try to keep the weak in what he sees as their rightful place. If a fellow player is struggling financially, the capitalist will enter Monopoly mode and organise a patronising loan scheme with extortionate interest rates, before tossing a few chipped gold pieces from his bulging pouch in the direction of the snivelling beggar.

The capitalist will always refuse to enter into alliances with anyone, especially socialists. He will refuse to acknowledge his inferiority to anything he encounters during a game, even if that inferiority is patently obvious to others. Furthermore, the dogmatic capitalist will refuse to accept that his interpretation of the rules is inaccurate, and will offer to take the argument "outside" if necessary. It will be seen that your capitalist player will be fully involved in 100% of all arguments, and will start about of 80% of them.

The Diplomat

He occupies the political centre ground, and is the kind of character who, when he comes across a fence, will sit on it. He'll go quietly about his business while others get

The motto of the diplomat is, 'He who dares, dies.' Also look out for anyone who says, 'Slow and steady wins the race.' A sure sign of a fence-straddling diplomat.

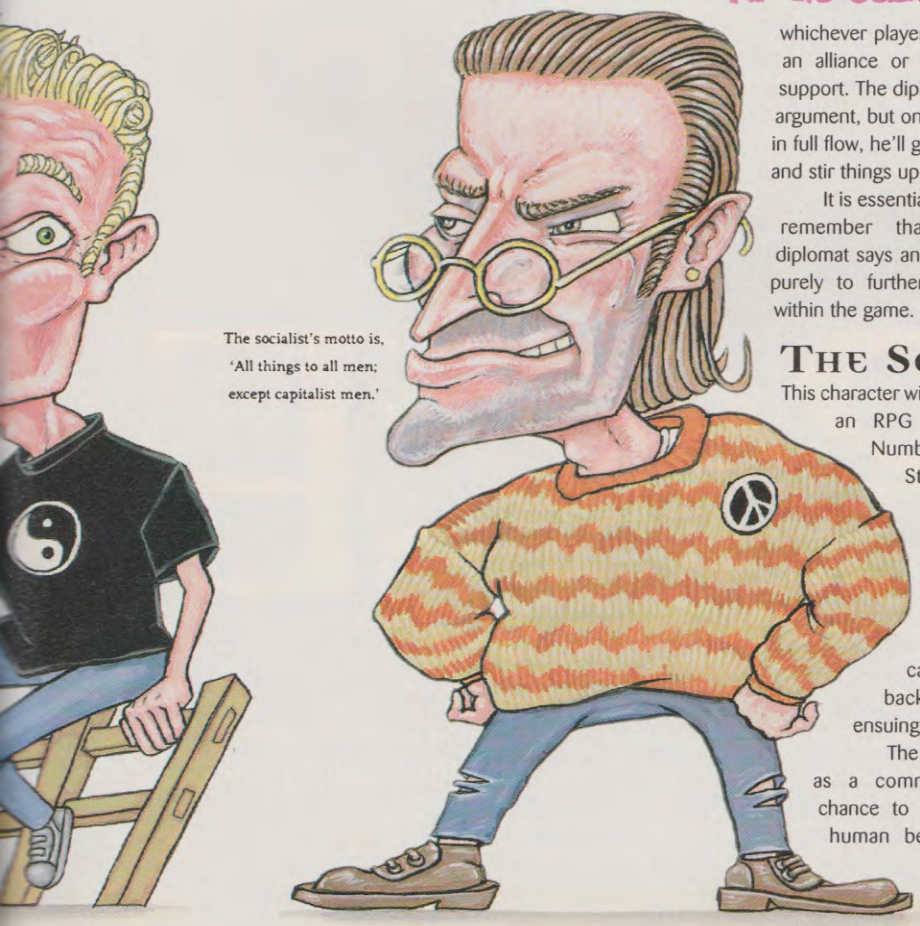


The motto of the capitalist is, 'It's not the taking part that counts, it's the winning.'

Illustration © arcane by Steve Lille

RIOT MES

his white paper on politics among the backbenchers.



The socialist's motto is, 'All things to all men; except capitalist men.'

their hands dirty. He'll rarely do anything controversial during a game, and will excel in talking his way out of trouble while simultaneously talking others into it. The diplomat will go to great lengths to convince any opponent who is about to attack him that he would be much better off concentrating his efforts on someone more powerful and with many more gold pieces to steal – such as the capitalist, of course.

Thus, the diplomat is a great manipulator of people, the one always looking to secure an alliance with another player. Indeed his ideal scenario is having an alliance with every player, but failing that, the diplomat will always enter into negotiations with the player who is most likely to do him a favour, though the diplomat will always insist that it is the other player who is getting the most benefit out of any deal. Of course, this is rarely the case.

It is when the capitalist and socialist are in dispute that the diplomat is in his element, often assuming the role of a second referee. He'll always say he can see both sides of the argument, but will actually be assessing the game situation and subtly favouring whichever player is likely to agree to an alliance or reward him for his support. The diplomat rarely starts an argument, but once a disagreement is in full flow, he'll get his spoon in there and stir things up a bit.

"The reversals of fortune that occur during RPGs cause entertaining political friction."

It is essential for other players to remember that everything the diplomat says and does is performed purely to further his own interests within the game.

The Socialist

This character will be seen as rarely in an RPG as they were in Number 10 Downing Street during the 1980s, but they do actually exist, and they are invariably students. Once a socialist comes into contact with a capitalist player, sit back and enjoy the ensuing conflict.

The socialist sees RPGs as a communal occasion, a chance to interact with fellow human beings. It is also a chance to have a fierce argument with the capitalist, an opportunity to belittle the capitalist's suspect gaming prowess, or utter those infamous words, 'it's only a game'. Naturally, the hot-headed capitalist will pick up the gauntlet and criticise the passive nature of the socialist, and particularly the knack socialists have of talking a good game but rarely playing one. It's all entertaining stuff.

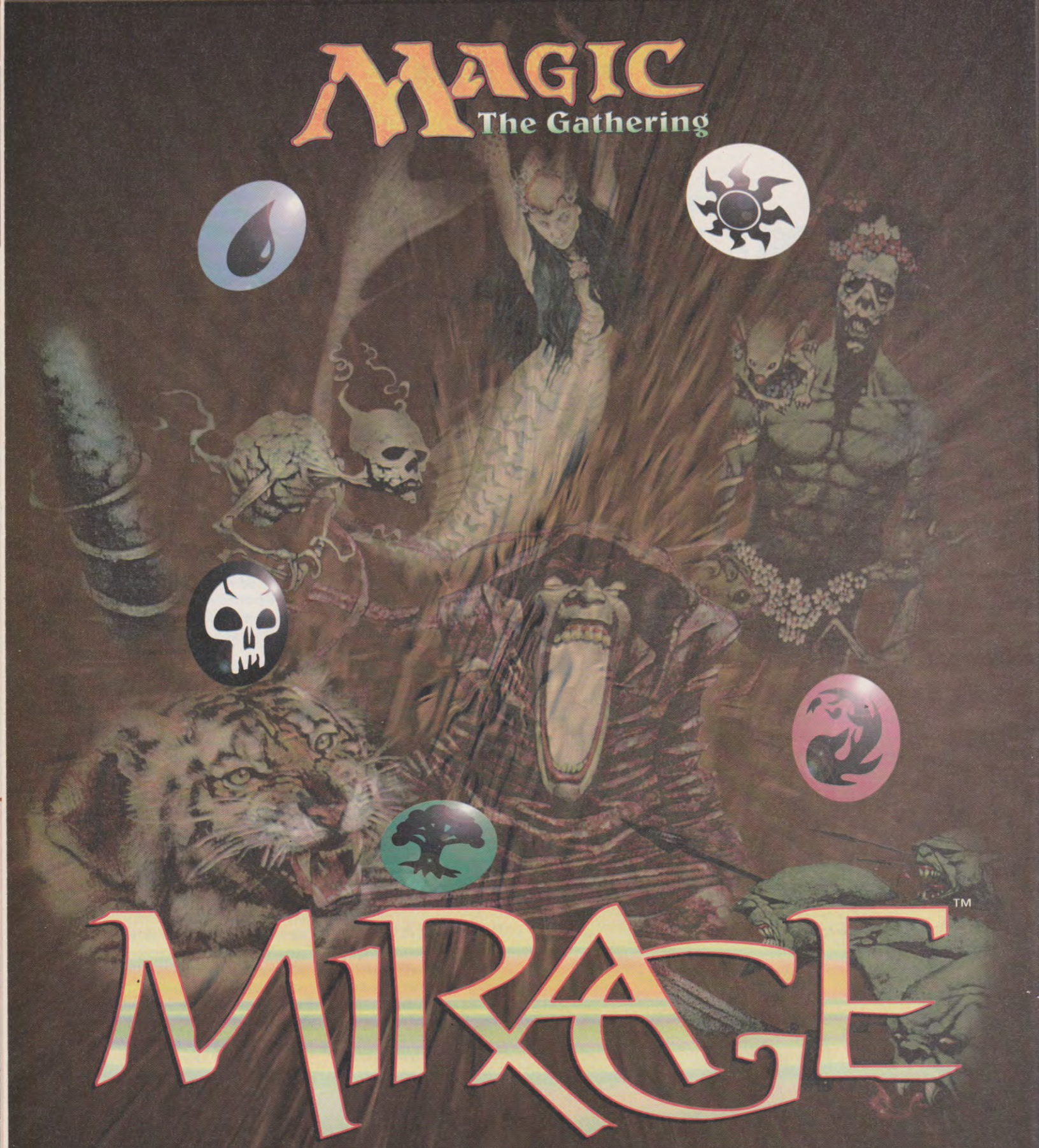
The socialist games player is someone who claims to be dedicated to fairness and equity within the game, adhering to the rulebook as though it were a personal manifesto. He dedicates himself to ensuring that any wealth uncovered during the game should be shared equally among the participants (with the exception of any capitalist participants, of course) and will curse when others refuse to abide. However, when the socialist finds wealth and is questioned about his apparent refusal to share it with others, he will argue childishly that they didn't share what they found, so why should he?

Because the socialist despises the, 'win at all costs' attitude of the capitalist, he will often have the weakest character. This will cause the socialist to develop a five-year plan or some similar scheme to improve his standing within the game. The plan will certainly fail, but will simply be replaced by a new scheme which will be even less successful. However, perennial failure will not colour the socialist's enjoyment of the game, because he is convinced that his methods will work eventually.

Ultimately, the socialist is likely to be forced into an alliance with the diplomat in order to fulfil his dream of seeing the capitalist struggling in the gutter. But other players should beware – once the socialist tastes power, he'll become every bit as unbearable as any capitalist.

So, it is the diplomat who will eventually emerge relatively unscathed from any gaming session. He will have steadily improved his character's standing within the game, while watching the more passionate players slowly but surely self-destruct. Of course, the diplomat will have added plenty of spice to any arguments between the capitalist and the socialist, while maintaining his friendship with both through his uncanny and strategic knack of being able to see both sides of any argument.

Finally, some advice for any gamers who find a diplomat in their midst – force him to be the referee.



This October, the world's number one trading card game is expanding once again with *Mirage*, the second stand-alone expansion for *Magic: The Gathering*®. It is also fully compatible with *Ice Age*™

Mirage introduces a unique play enviroment and exciting new game mechanics.
Product available in60 card starter decks and 15 card booster packs.

If you have any queries concerning any of our products please write to us at the address below or phone us using one of our Customer Service hotline numbers. **0345 125599** (UK), **+44 141 226 5205** (Republic of Ireland), 9.00am – 6.00pm, Monday to Friday.
Wizards of the Coast UK Ltd. P.O. Box 1562, Glasgow G2 8BW, http://wotc.ukonline.co.uk/

Deckmaster and Wizards of the Coast are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
Mirage a trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Wizards OF THE COAST®

MAGIC The Gathering

THE MONTH IN GAMES

You've never had it so good.

RATHER THAN SLOWING UP now that GenCon has been and gone, the current wave of new games and supplements is continuing to chuck fresh bounty apace.

This month sees the best version of *The Star Wars Roleplaying Game* yet, the deadly-but-superb *Rod of Seven Parts* adventure for *AD&D*, along with the CD-ROM version of the *AD&D* rules, a great new collectable dice game from Lester Smith, the death of a Dragon in *Shadowrun* and loads more.

Just wait until you see our next issue...

Our policy is to review honestly, fairly and incisively all of the major roleplaying, CCG and related game releases. If it's praised in **arcane** you know you can buy it with confidence.

All our reviews are by experienced gamers and independent, professional journalists; people who play the games that you do. This definitely is *the* place for definitive reviews of games and expansions.

A lot of the stuff reviewed in **arcane** is imported from the USA by various distributors, so the prices we give are guidelines only.

Pick of the month

"One of the most action-packed settings ever devised."

Star Wars
Page 60

The Rod of Seven Parts
Page 62

"A big, character-killing task worth sticking with."

The Icons

Each review in **arcane** is identified with a rather nifty icon showing what kind of game it is. Here's what they mean:

Roleplaying systems

Collectable card games and expansions

Board games, miniature systems

Dice games and expansions

Computer games and utilities

Books and supplements

The Scores

Everything reviewed in **arcane** gets a mark out of 10. Here's a guide to what the individual marks represent...

Score 10/10 Perfect. There's simply nothing better.
Score 9/10 Excellent, a classic. Highly recommended.
Score 8/10 Very good, with few problems. Recommended.
Score 7/10 Good, but not exceptional.
Score 6/10 Above average, but not without problems.
Score 5/10 Average, or a mixture of good and bad.
Score 4/10 Below average, but not without merit.
Score 3/10 Poor, crucially flawed in some way.
Score 2/10 Very poor, should be avoided.
Score 1/10 Appallingly bad, no redeeming features at all.

arcane seal of approval

Each month we fight and argue among ourselves to select that one extra-special product most deserving of your money and the coveted **arcane** accolade.

The index

Everything in this month's massive reviews section...

70 **AD&D: A Hero's Tale**
64 **AD&D: CD-ROM Core Rules**
71 **AD&D: Fritz Leiber's Lankhmar**
72 **AD&D: Heroes' Lorebook**
76 **AD&D: Naval Battle Rules**
62 **AD&D: Rod of Seven Parts**
74 **Albion**
73 **BattleTech: The Fall of Terra**
68 **Blood Dawn**
73 **Castle Falkenstein: Six-Guns and Sorcery**
70 **Chaos Progenitus**
72 **Cyberpunk: Chromebook 4**
74 **Earthdawn: Throal**
76 **GURPS: Alternate Earths**
74 **Heavy Gear: Terranovan Technology**
72 **Shadowrun: Portfolio of a Dragon – Dunkelzhan's Secrets**
66 **Silent Death: Next Millennium**
75 **Star Trek: The Card Game**
70 **Star Wars: Live Action Adventures**
75 **Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire Sourcebook**
60 **The Star Wars RPG: Second Edition Revised and Expanded**

The Star Wars Roleplaying Game

Second Edition Revised and Expanded

£19.95 **West End Games** **001 717 253 6990** **Out now**

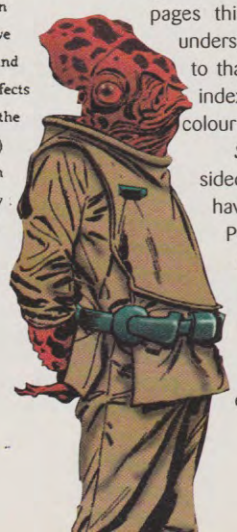
Great movies don't always make great games... but there are exceptions.

For those dedicated *Star Wars* players who already own the original *2nd Edition* rulebook, West End Games will be detailing the rules changes is issue 11 of *The Official Star Wars Adventure Journal*, or will post you a copy if you drop the folks there a line.

A long time ago and in a galaxy far, far away... There was a setting almost tailor made for roleplaying. Luckily enough, West End Games not only realised that, but produced an excellent game which did a brilliant job of recreating the excitement and adventure of the *Star Wars* movies, and it has been extremely popular ever since.

This new version of *The Star Wars Roleplaying Game* is, as the title suggests, not a 'proper' third edition, but rather a reorganisation and revision of the second edition book. The actual rules changes are minimal, and for the most part represent a return to the simpler mechanics of the first edition. What has changed is the presentation. The book has been completely re-written, with more examples, explanations, hints and tips, and background information, making it 100 pages thicker but much easier to understand as a result. In addition to that, there's a comprehensive index, and the whole thing is full-colour throughout.

Star Wars fans should keep an eye out for the stunning trailer for the re-edited *Star Wars* movies, due for a cinema release next year. Several as-yet unseen sequences have been restored and all the effects (including the space combats) have been completely redone. The end result is stunning.



Star Wars is based on a six-sided dice system. Characters have six attributes – Dexterity, Perception, Knowledge, Strength, Mechanical and Technical – each of which is rated by a dice code (normal humans range from 2D to 4D). Further, each attribute is related to a number of skills, which begin at the same level as the attribute (so someone with Dexterity 3D firing a Blaster will roll 3 six-sided dice, unless they have improved their Blaster skill).

Characters can be generated in two ways. The easiest is for a player to choose a template from those offered (Bounty Hunter, Brash Pilot, Failed Jedi and so on). The template is a pre-generated character that's almost ready to play – all the player has to do is flesh out the character's background and personality, assign 7D to their choice of skills, and you're off.

"It positively encourages players to attempt the kind of hair-brained actions that are portrayed in the movies."

Those who want slightly more control over their character, or who can't find a template that appeals to them, can choose to create a new one from scratch. The system for doing so is clearly explained and takes little longer than picking one from the book, although it does require a considerable amount of input on the referee's part.

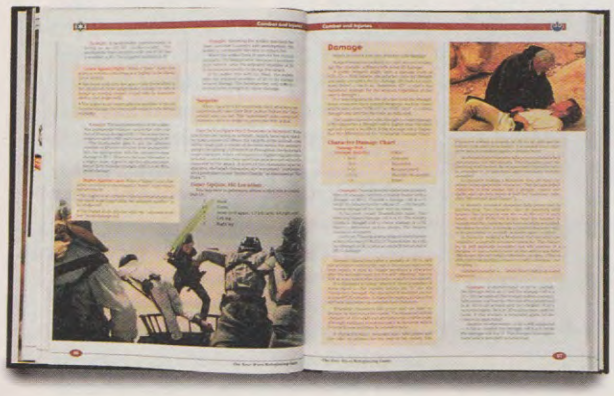
As with character generation, the rules themselves are simple and easy to get the hang of. When attempting a task, the character rolls the relevant skill or attribute dice, adds them together and then compares the total to the Difficulty, which is either set by the referee or determined by the result of another roll (for example, when shooting someone with a Blaster the difficulty is dependent on the range to the target, or the target's Dodge roll, if they decide to get out of the way).

At its core this is all there is to the rules. It's both a simple and fast-moving system that's perfectly suited to the style of the ever-popular *Star Wars* movies. Even complete newcomers to roleplaying will find this game easy enough to get the hang of, and by basing nearly all skills on an attribute the system gives almost any character at least a slim chance of succeeding at any given task. In this way it positively encourages players to attempt the kind

of gloriously heroic actions that are portrayed in the *Star Wars* movies.

Likewise, a significant portion of the book is used to present rules for a variety of situations, including chases and combat between anything from individual characters to Star Destroyers, repairing and upgrading equipment and so on. But you are continuously reminded that it's more important to keep the game flowing and the story moving than it is to worry about the exact system for ramming an AT-AT walker with a landspeeder or whatever. The *Star Wars* rule of thumb is, "Pick a difficulty number. If the character's skill roll is equal or higher, they succeed" – good advice that is repeated throughout the book. If you want detailed rules for things, they're probably here, but you don't *need* them to play the game in most cases.

It's this emphasis on roleplaying, adventure and story over rules mechanics and number crunching that's one of the most notable aspects of the game, and one of the reasons why it succeeds so well. Of course, the *Star Wars* universe, with its vast potential for adventure of all sorts helps, not to mention the fact that just about anyone playing will have seen the movies and therefore understands the basics of the setting. But even with such great things going for it, *The Star Wars Roleplaying Game* still manages to stand out as a great game in its own right. Just flicking through the rules is enough to make you want to play.



Star Wars is already one of the best-supported roleplaying games around, with dozens of supplements and sourcebooks already available covering every aspect of the films, comics and books, with more on the way. Look out for reviews in future issues of **arcane**.

And the players said...

PAUL: "Perfectly captures the atmosphere of the movies."

STEVE: "One of the best-designed rulebooks I've seen, and a great game too."

JAMES: "The only type of person who wouldn't love this game is the type of person who doesn't like the movies. I rest my case."

Probably the biggest reason for this is that the entire book is crammed with insightful and relevant advice and hints, which will be useful for both novice and experienced players and referees alike. Hardly any aspect of the rules or background is presented without an example or a discussion of how to use it in game terms. Rather than simply describing an area of space, the book will describe the area, then talk about what kind of adventures could be set there, how the area could be used in an ongoing campaign, and why the players might end up there, often with a helpful suggestion or two for a possible adventure.

Even the colour is used intelligently, rather than just to make the book look better – the key concepts and definitions in each section are pulled out in coloured boxes, with the detailed descriptions, advice and examples around them. This enables you to skim through the rules very quickly to get a good feel for the system, and then be able to go back and get an explanation of things you don't understand. Not only does this make the book very easy to digest, but it makes finding the relevant rules during play much simpler and less time-consuming.

In all, then, this *Revised and Expanded* edition of *The Star Wars Roleplaying Game* is the best version yet of a game that's always been great. Rather than a simple re-print of the second edition, it's clear that the designers at West End Games have made every effort to improve the game as much as they possibly can. It's perhaps best summed up by the first (and most important) piece of advice it gives to referees: "Your goal is to make sure everyone has fun. If you and the players are having a good time, nothing else matters." Fast-paced, easy to understand rules, a well-designed and written book, loads of helpful advice, and one of the most atmospheric and action-packed fictional settings ever devised. What more could you want?

Andy Butcher

Score 9/10

May the Force be with you...

Of course, *Star Wars* wouldn't be, well, *Star Wars* without the Force – the mystical energy field that's created by all living things, and binds the galaxy together. As any self-respecting *Star Wars* fan knows, the Force is pervasive and all-encompassing, and so it is in *The Star Wars Roleplaying Game.*

All characters in *Star Wars* begin the game with one or two Force Points, which can be spent at any time to double the number of dice the character rolls. This represents the character making a superhuman effort to succeed and (knowingly or unknowingly) calling on the Force to aid them.

The Dark Side is represented by Dark Side Points. Whenever a character uses a Force Point in fear or anger, or towards an evil or selfish end, he or she runs the risk of gaining a Dark Side Point. Every time this happens, there is a chance that the character will be consumed by the Dark Side, turning evil and becoming (in most cases, at least) a non-player character.

The Force is also the root of a Jedi's powers. Some characters can learn the ways of the Force, as represented by three Force Skills – Control, Sense and Alter. These skills are used in combination with a number of Force Powers to enable characters to perform amazing feats. But Jedi characters must be even more wary of the Dark Side, because their increased sensitivity to the Force makes them more susceptible to its lure.

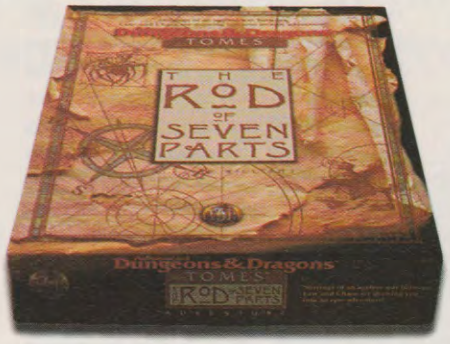
As with the rest of the *Star Wars* rules, those covering the Force are both well-designed and simple to use, placing the emphasis firmly on action and storytelling rather than mechanics, and as such are ideally suited to the game.

The Rod o

An *AD&D Tomes* boxed adventure **£18.99**

TSR **01223 212517** **Out now**

give your adventurers a bit of stick.



One of the original *AD&D* artefacts has been dragged out, dusted down and made the focus for a major new *Tomes* campaign. This is no sad 90s remake of a classic oldie, but a fantastic new legend that has been drawn from a few lines in the *AD&D 2nd Edition DM's Guide*. When reread these scant few words would seem to be a weak source of inspiration, yet this once throw-away item has been turned into a major campaign.

The original legend had it that at the Dawn of Time the forces of Law warred with the forces of Chaos for control of the Cosmos. The Battle of Pesh was the climax of this campaign where the armies of Chaos were led by the Wolf-Spider Miska (the only being capable of shaping the teeming hordes of the Abyss into an 'army'), while the forces of Law were championed by the Vaati or Wind Dukes. Desperately outnumbered, the Wind Dukes fashioned the Rod of Seven Parts – a weapon powerful enough to kill Miska in a single strike.

"It's a big, character-killing task, but one that's well worth sticking with."

Yet the Battle of Pesh was an away draw. Neither Law nor Chaos won the day. The Wind Dukes were decimated, but in the final moments their leader struck Miska with the Rod. The blow was not clean however, and rather than being slain the Wolf-Spider was mortally wounded and imprisoned for eternity within the Abyss. The resulting balance created the multiverse as we now know it – a tense stand-off between order and anarchy. Even now, though, the Rod of Seven Parts holds the key, for it can still both slay Miska and free him. So the fate of the multiverse is in the hands of the Rod's wielder.

The power and success of *The Rod of Seven Parts* campaign stems directly from the artefact itself. The essential premise is that because the Rod is so potent it cannot be conventionally protected. Therefore, to keep it safe the Wind Dukes cunningly designed the separate sections of the Rod to scatter to the seven corners of the globe whenever its full powers were employed – in other words, striking Miska. Add to that the fact that each piece of the Rod both leads and urges its bearer in the direction of the next sequential section, and the structure soon becomes clear.

Having understood this core premise the characters are launched into a fearsome battle. Once the first section of the Rod has fallen into the players' hands they are irrevocably committed to a quest which will take them the length and breadth of their homeworld, and eventually into the heart of the Abyss. It's a big, character-killing task that's probably a bit too long for its own good, but one that's so fascinating it's well worth sticking with.

The success of *The Rod of Seven Parts* lies in its flexibility. With three starting points and three possible conclusions there's real scope for players to make their own decisions rather than scrabbling to satisfy a designer's conditions. Throughout each set-piece useful trouble-shooting guides crop up and alternative solutions are suggested to the ref. In essence, *The Rod of Seven Parts* guides the course of events rather than forcing the pace.

And so this relaxed approach encourages players through the adventures, but these are not the only carrots that this stick has to offer. There are glorious visual cue cards which will help the players to picture the locations and characters they meet perfectly. These are indicative of the extremely high standard of artwork throughout all three manuals and the vast

There's a fine taster of the adventure to be had in the novel of *The Rod of Seven Parts* (reviewed in **arcane** 6). It takes a hapless hobbit on a similar, but not identical, odyssey, so you can read it to get a feel for the task without ruining the adventure.

f Seven Parts

number of maps, which underline the superior quality of the set.

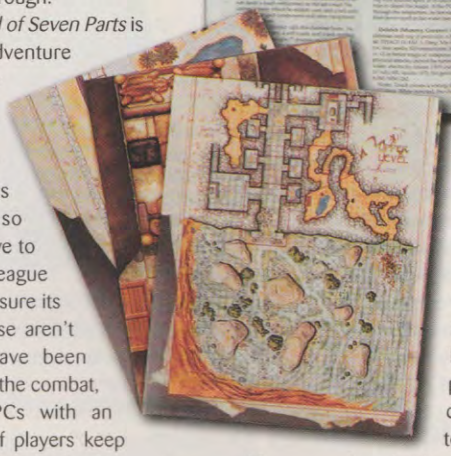
The weaknesses of *The Rod* are few and far between. There are a few annoying typographical errors (Side Treks is transposed to Sick Treks) which trip up an otherwise highly readable manual. The only real problem, though, is the size – in all honesty, the campaign may just be too big for one party to play through.

However, *The Rod of Seven Parts* is a very persuasive adventure because it addresses the fraught issue of heroic power. Potent artefacts have a way of finding themselves powerful guardians, so parties are going to have to tackle some major league nasties if they are to ensure its safe assembly. Yet these aren't just monsters that have been dropped in to crank up the combat, but well-rounded NPCs with an agenda of their own. If players keep their ears open and their brains in gear it should become obvious how to reclaim the next section without the need for a fight, or, if it comes to blows, the best way to tip the balance in their favour. It's this ability to turn no-win scenarios into victories that separates heroes from hardmen, and it's what drives the *Rod* campaign.

The third segment, for example, is held by a Cloud Giant Clan who is currently at war with a local family of dragons. The party can side with the giants against the dragons and hope to earn the segment as a reward, or else side with the dragons against the giants and infiltrate the giant's lair under cover of polymorph. The chances of even a tough party beating either group in a battle are pretty slim, and their chances of victory over both together are nonexistent. So players are forced to muster up their courage and attempt to survive this vicious intrigue long enough to spot and steal the segment.

And stepping into a Cloud Giant Castle which you know could well come under serious Dragon attack at any second is a great gulp moment, regardless of how hard you reckon you are!

Trenton Webb



The gambling game of Dragonfire, used in *The Rod of Seven Parts*, can be played with regular playing cards we are told, but "for a better fantasy atmosphere, use *Spellfire*™ cards." Hmm, now I wonder who makes those?

Stick it to 'em

While finding your way around *The Rod of Seven Parts* you're going to get pitched against all manner of serious nasties. And you can form a pretty good idea of just how sticky things are going to get when the powers of the Rod itself are examined.

For starters, each segment has its own power. These start with a rather modest Cure Light Wounds but gradually work up through Slow, Haste, Gust of Wind, True Seeing, Hold Monster and up to Heal many times a day with limitless charges.

On top of this, during assembly the Rod itself offers +5 damage, Fly, +2 on *all* throws, Charm Elemental, Weather Summoning and Summon Elemental as often as you like and a check-free Resurrection once. All of which you're undoubtedly going to need if your character is to come out of the campaign. Come out of it alive, that is, rather than be damned to a plane of the Abyss for the rest of time.

You have been warned.

Behavioural psychology

As you'd expect, carrying the most important artefact in the universe around in your back pocket does have some major penalties. Firstly, the damn thing lights up like a beacon for the forces of Chaos every time its powers are invoked. Then there's the fact that piece-holders are oddly compelled to seek out the next sequential section, which can seriously ruin your life. What's truly tricky, though, is its tendency to turn you into a fascist.

As the Rod is united the holder slowly finds himself becoming more Lawful, more correct and more insistent on order. Now this may not seem like a problem at first glance – *AD&D* is littered with Lawful characters, after all. But it's the increasingly manic nature of Law that will make for entertaining play as characters find themselves robbed of the ability to break a Law (even unjust ones!), unable to cheat Spider-fiends and become obsessively neat. And that's just up to section four. You should see what sections five, six and seven can do to a thief's reputation!

Score 9/10

AD&D CD-ROM Core Rules

A CD-ROM tool for *AD&D* Dungeon Masters **£45** **TSR** **01223 212517** **Out now**

The entire set of *AD&D* rulebooks on one CD-ROM? It's this, and much more...

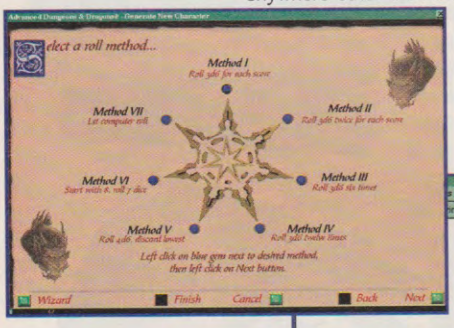
If you were to buy the five core rulebooks separately, you'd find yourself having to fork out a grand total of £38 – which is just £13 more than the cost of this CD-ROM.

One of the worst things about refereeing *AD&D* is the amount of stuff you've got to lug around with you. There's the *DMG*, the *Player's Guide*, the *Monstrous Manual*, your campaign and scenario details (which can amount to several boxes), and more often than not a whole heap of stuff besides. Only the truly dedicated would even consider playing anywhere other than their own abode. The prospect, then, of having all the main rulebooks on a CD-ROM is rather appealing, providing, of course, you've got a PC handy when you're playing your session. Few Dungeon Masters play with a PC on the gaming table (they do take up a large amount of room, after all), which seems to be a fundamental flaw with the whole premise of the *Core Rules* disc. However, before I start to engage its merits and problems, let me first explain what you get for your £45.

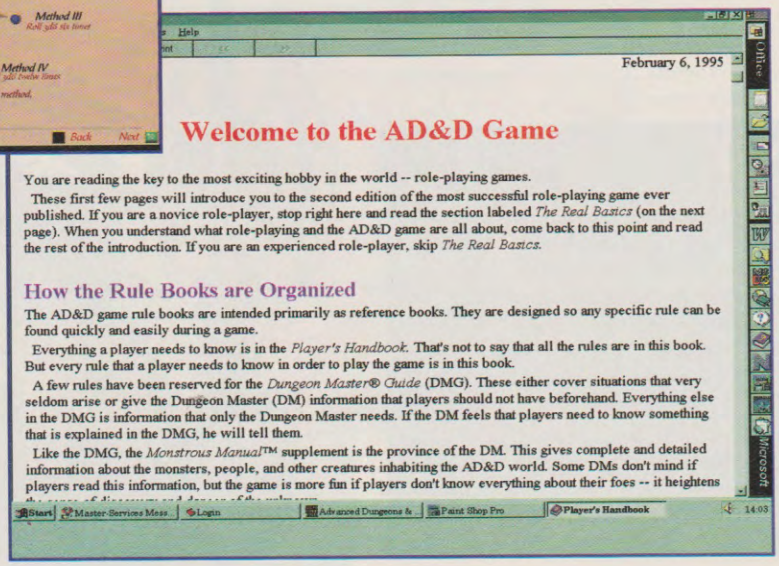
"I'm not terribly impressed... Buy it if you've got money to burn."

The main element to the *AD&D CD-ROM Core Rules* is, not surprisingly, the rulebooks themselves, both in Rich Text Format and as Windows Help files. The books include: *The Dungeon Master's Guide, The Player's Handbook,* the *Monstrous Manual, Tome of Magic* and *Arms and Equipment.* There's also a *Key Topics* book which summarises the main *AD&D* rules (sort of like a Frequently Asked Questions document) and an Instructions booklet, which explains how to use all of the rest. Thankfully, the text is very easy to read, being presented in a large enough text size to make it clearly visible even on smaller monitors. Naturally, you can print the books (which would probably work out more expensive that buying the hardback versions, by the time you've taken ink costs into account) and sections of each (which would be handy in the case of the *Monstrous Manual* – simply print out the monsters that the party are going to encounter in any given session instead of carrying the whole book around to your mate's house).

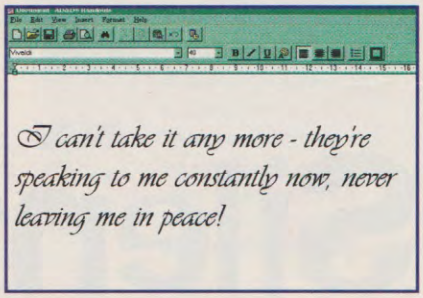
The books are relatively easy to navigate, thanks to the hypertext links which have been created for all of the main entries and rulings. However, there's no search feature – something I expected to find – which is a massive disappointment; because of the size of the files, it can take an age of scrolling to find precisely what you're after, even where hypertext links have been



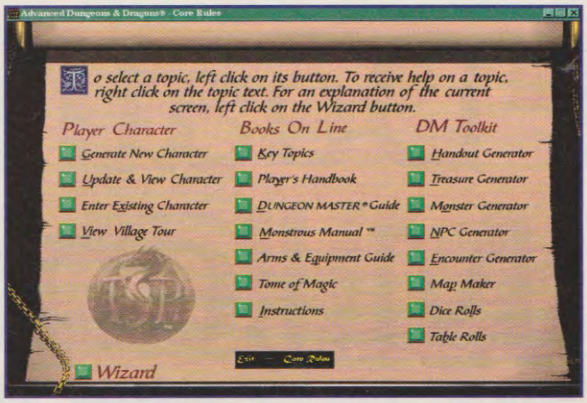
Above: When generating characters, you can use all of the standard rolling methods, though there's a temptation to keep on rolling until you get a great set of scores.


Help
February 6, 1995
Welcome to the AD&D Game
You are reading the key to the most exciting hobby in the world -- role-playing games.
These first few pages will introduce you to the second edition of the most successful role-playing game ever published. If you are a novice role-player, stop right here and read the section labeled The Real Basics (on the next page). When you understand what role-playing and the AD&D game are all about, come back to this point and read the rest of the introduction. If you are an experienced role-player, skip The Real Basics.
How the Rule Books are Organized
The AD&D game rule books are intended primarily as reference books. They are designed so any specific rule can be found quickly and easily during a game.
Everything a player needs to know is in the Player's Handbook. That's not to say that all the rules are in this book. But every rule that a player needs to know in order to play the game is in this book.
A few rules have been reserved for the Dungeon Master® Guide (DMG). These either cover situations that very seldom arise or give the Dungeon Master (DM) information that players should not have beforehand. Everything else in the DMG is information that only the Dungeon Master needs. If the DM feels that players need to know something that is explained in the DMG, he will tell them.
Like the DMG, the Monstrous Manual™ supplement is the province of the DM. This gives complete and detailed information about the monsters, people, and other creatures inhabiting the AD&D world. Some DMs don't mind if players read this information, but the game is more fun if players don't know everything about their foes -- it heightens
Start
Master-Services Mess...
Login
Advanced Dungeons &
Paint Shop Pro
Player's Handbook
14:03

Right: There's a decent enough introduction to the CD-ROM, which explains how the books have been organised.



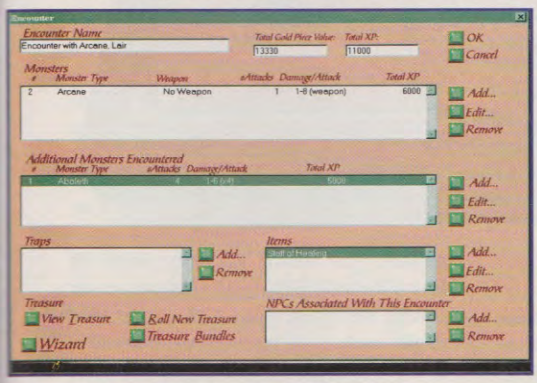
I can't take it any more - they're speaking to me constantly now, never leaving me in peace!



Above: Use a basic word processor to create your own player hand-outs.
Left: The main screen, giving you access to all of the tools for players and DMs.

included. For instance, try getting the details on a Spectre quickly – you can't type in 'spectre' as a keyword, but must instead scroll down through the list of all the monsters which fall alphabetically before it in the hypertext listing. This is a clumsy way of finding information, and TSR could have made it a lot easier.

Another omission, which is perhaps inevitable given the format that the text has been presented in, is that there are no pictures in the books at all. This is fine, more or less, as far as the *DMG, PHB* and *Tome of Magic* are concerned, but illustrations are extremely useful when it comes to describing monsters that appear in the *MM,* and the *Arms and Equipment* book states right at the beginning that everything in it is illustrated, when in fact this is quite clearly not the case (there are illustrations of equipment in the character generation section, but that's it). Because of the lack of illustration, it has to be said that the rulebooks as they are presented here on CD-ROM can be used as no more than an addition to the paper versions. If you've only got the CD-ROM, you're going to have a hard time running *AD&D.*



So, we must look to the other features that the disc offers for added worth. There are a number of extra features, primarily designed to make a DM's life easier. The first you come across is the character generator. This is an extremely fast way of rolling up a PC – the whole process, including proficiency choices and the purchase of equipment, can take as little as ten minutes (when done using the basic books, the creation of a 1st level character can usually take as long as two hours, so that's a big time saver). All of the dice rolling options are presented, so there's plenty of flexibility built in, though there's no way that you can 'cheat' – most DMs will let a player re-roll a dice or two throughout the character generation process, especially if a Hit Points roll turns out to be a 1. Nevertheless, this is a very handy feature and, providing you don't use the excellent *Skills and Powers* sub-rules (9/10 in **arcane** 2) which aren't included as an option (big mistake TSR!), it will probably be used time and again.

Other character tools exist to enable you to update characters created with the disc (when they go up a level and so forth) and to enable you to enter the details of a character which has been created using the traditional method. Unfortunately, it would appear that you can't print out blank character sheets, which would have been very handy.

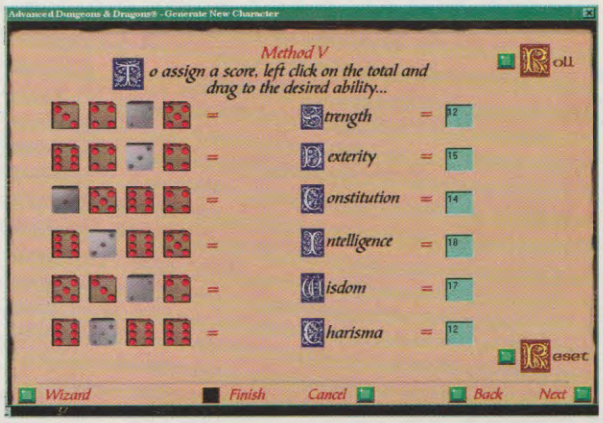
For the DM there's a tool which enables you to quickly create non-player characters, though I suggest you use this only for creating 'general' NPCs – if you've got a major, long-standing villain to create, it's best to do it yourself. There are other tools too – a handout generator (which is just a basic word processor), a treasure generator based on the standard random treasure tables, a monster generator, an encounter generator (which lets you lump monsters together with treasure) and a map builder. This latter tool sounds more interesting than it actually is – the maps you create with it look pretty poor.

Overall, I'm not terribly impressed with the *AD&D CD-ROM Core Rules.* It had a lot of potential, but that potential hasn't really been capitalised on. There could have been splendid illustrations of all the monsters included, but this is not the case; there should have been a search feature for locating rulings in a hurry, but this isn't the case either. Yes, some of the tools are jolly useful, but they aren't the kind of things you can do yourself with pen and paper and a bit of time. I can see myself using it, though only occasionally (probably when writing scenarios on my PC – it'll be handy for creating NPCs and cut and pasting in monster details and descriptions). So, buy it if you've got money to burn, but this is not an essential purchase for all PC-owning DMs by any means.

Paul Pettengale

The CD-ROM needs a surprisingly hefty PC to run. The Pentium machine used to test it was frequently informing me that it had run out of memory, even though it was running Windows 95 and had 16Mb of RAM. The CD-ROM also works under *Windows 3.1.*

The character generation process only takes ten or so minutes using the CD. That's far faster than doing it by hand, though not as much fun in the long run.



What's the point of that?

One of the more curious elements of the *AD&D CD-ROM Core Rules* disc is what's somewhat ubiquitously entitled the Village Tour. It is, in fact, a five-minute long movie, created using computer graphics, with a voice over which has a DM explaining to a couple of people what their characters are getting up to and what they can see. The 'characters' respond to the Dungeon Master and a short story is told.

The plot is typical fantasy stock: a village is threatened by an ancient evil which has reappeared from the dead because a magical talisman, which protects the village, has been lost. The two characters have the talisman in their possession, but getting it into the hands of the village's protector – its cleric – isn't at all easy.

I guess this cartoon is designed to show people new to the game exactly what goes on. And to this end it succeeds, sort of, though it fails to demonstrate any of the rules – merely how a gaming session is held, and how a plot should unfold.

Score 5/10

Silent Death: The Next Millennium

A game of tactical space combat | **Boxed set £33.95** | **Rulebook only £11.95**

Iron Crown Enterprises | **001 800 325 0479** | **Out now**

ICE's space combat game returns, complete with three new supplements.

SILENT DEATH
THE NEXT MILLENNIUM
Deluxe Edition
Silent Death blasts you into the Next Millennium!
A quick and easy-to-play starship combat game
Includes 48 plastic ships & fully updated rules for starship combat
ICE
#7200

Perhaps it's not surprising, given its name, but *Silent Death: The Next Millennium* is a new edition of *Silent Death*, a game of space combat set in a war-torn universe 9,000 years in the future. The game is available in two forms – either as a deluxe boxed set, containing everything you need to play, or as the rulebook alone. This new edition is set 50 years further into the future than the original game, and much has changed in the detailed background. What hasn't changed is the frequency of pitched space battles between a large variety of factions, using different ships and various types of weapons.

In the basic game, *Silent Death* concerns itself with battles featuring two types of ship – fighters and gunboats. Fighters are crewed by either a lone pilot, or by a pilot and one or two gunners, whereas the larger gunboats are crewed by a pilot and three or more gunners. The *Warhounds* supplement (see right) adds rules for larger vessels, in the form of Corvettes, Frigates and Destroyers. Each ship has a basic points value representing its power, to which is added the skills of its crew. Battles can either take the form of scenarios, with specific objectives and pre-defined forces, or free-for-all battles, with all players choosing a fleet worth a specific number of points.

Ships are represented in the game by models on the map, and starship displays on paper. The starship display includes all the game information about the ship, including critical hit tables, damage tracks, weapons and so on. It also records the skills of the ship's crew – pilots have both pilot and gunner skills, while gunners only need the latter. Both skills range from 1 to 10, and have various effects during combat.

The game is played on a hex grid, and proceeds in turns, which are broken down into stages. First comes the Warhead Launch Phase, during which both sides launch missiles (fast moving warheads which hit later in the same turn) and torpedoes (slower moving warheads which home in on their targets each turn). Next comes movement, in which initiative is determined and players move ships alternately, with the loser of initiative going first. Each ship has a Drive, which is the maximum number of movement points it can use, with different manoeuvres costing different amounts depending on the size of the ship and its pilot's skill. Torpedoes also home in on their targets in this phase.

Phase three is the Torpedo Results Phase, in which any torpedo that managed to intercept its target explodes unless dodged, and jamming attempts may be made. The fourth phase then deals with cannon fire. Gunners fire their weapons in order of skill, then pilots in order of skill. Each weapon on

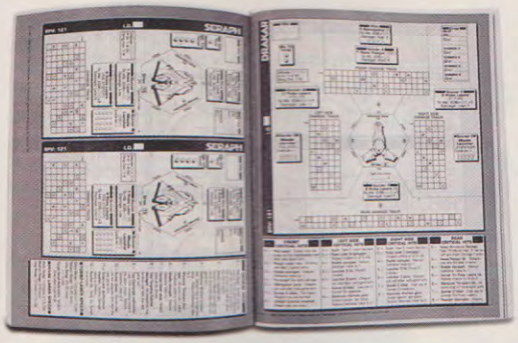
> "If you love the starship combat scenes in *Star Wars*, you'll have a good time playing this."

The first edition of *Silent Death* was published in 1990, and was inspired by the involved *Star Strike* game, which in turn was inspired by *Space Master*, the science fiction roleplaying game developed from ICE's *Rolemaster* system. There were also three supplements: *Overkill*, *Black Guard* and *Night Brood*.

What's in the box?

The deluxe boxed edition of *Silent Death: The Next Millennium* contains everything you need to play the game, including...

- **The rulebook**
- **An introductory scenario pack**
- **A booklet of tables and displays**
- **296 plastic miniatures (including 48 starfighters and gunboats)**
- **48 stands for the starships**
- **9 dice, including 1D4, 3D6, 3D8 and 1D10**
- **2 hex-based map sheets**



a ship has a firing arc and a range – any target within both may be shot.

To hit the target you roll the weapon's dice (lasers, for example, roll 2D6) plus a bonus dice determined by the gunner's skill (ranging from 1D4 to 1D10), and must beat the target ship's defence value (which represents its shields and manoeuvrability). If you hit, damage is determined from the same dice throw, depending on the type of weapon (pulse lasers, for example, inflict the lowest dice rolled as damage, whereas Ion Rams inflict the total rolled).

Damage is reduced by the target's armour, and any remaining points are applied to the ship's damage track. As the track is filled in, ships lose points from their drives, defence value and armour, as well as having weapons destroyed and suffering critical hits.

Finally comes the Missile Results Phase, in which missiles fired at the start of the turn attack their targets and damage is resolved if they hit. Then a new turn begins.

As you can see, the key element of the *Silent Death* rules is simplicity. Not only does this mean that you can learn to play in a matter of minutes, but it also allows fairly impressive battles involving dozens of fighters to be played without causing your head to explode under the strain. The cannon fire and damage rules are particularly elegant, keeping things fast while still allowing for a wide variety of weapons. Free from complex rules mechanics, you get to concentrate on what you're trying to do and how you're going to go about it.

In addition to the basic system and background, though, *Silent Death: The Next Millennium* also features an impressive array of optional rules. Once you've mastered the basics you can pick and choose from these to customise your game – everything from black holes and asteroids to damage control and point defence weapons can be included. Although these inevitably add some complexity to the game, an obvious effort has gone into making everything as streamlined and simple as possible.

Topping off the rulebook is a ship design system, the one thing that the original game really lacked. The system presented is fairly easy to use, and allows you to create virtually any type of fighter or gunboat you can imagine, complete with points costs for every single system.

All in all, *Silent Death: The Next Millennium* is a fun game. It's quick to learn, easy to play, and the variety of ships and weapons on offer keeps things interesting, at least for a while. It does perhaps lack some of the depth of more complex wargame systems, and isn't quite as absorbing as it might be. But if you love the starship combat scenes in *Star Wars,* you'll have a good time playing this.

Andy Butcher

Score 7/10

And the players said...

PAUL: "Good fun, but it lacks the atmosphere of games such as *BattleTech.*"

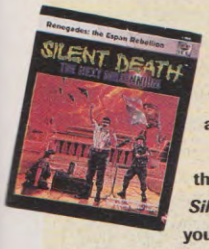
IAN: "Nice and simple to learn, but still allowing for a lot of clever tactics."

EM: "It didn't really grab me, but I enjoyed playing it."

As well as more supplements, ICE has plans to expand the line with a number of new games, including a ground combat system set in the *Silent Death* universe, a giant robot gladiatorial combat system, and *Space Riggers,* which will use the *Silent Death* system to recreate fantasy space battles between wooden spaceships and dragons.

Three supplements for *Silent Death* have already been released...

Renegades: The Espan Rebellion £7.95



The first supplement for *Silent Death, Renegades* details the major conflicts of the Espan Civil War, in which rebel ships clash with government forces. As well as full background on the Espan system and the history of the rebellion, the book features no less than 19 scenarios, detailing the progress of the war, notes on using the campaign system to recreate the civil war in its entirety, six new ship designs and two new weapons – Salvage Claws and Tractor Beams.

If you've played through the scenarios in the basic *Silent Death* rules and find yourself hungry for more, *Renegades: The Espan Rebellion* is the next logical step. The new ships and weapons keep things interesting without adding greatly to the complexity of the game, and the new scenarios are varied and fun to play. Perhaps not a particularly inspiring book, but good, solid stuff nonetheless.

Score 7/10

Sunrunners £7.95

Similar in form to the *Renegades* book, *Sunrunners* concerns itself with the mercenary group of the title, made up of the last survivors of Barat-Tuul, a world completely and utterly destroyed by the Hatchlings.

As well as details of the Sunrunners and the Forward Frontier region of space, this includes 11 scenarios, several comprising more than one battle, notes on using Sunrunner forces in a campaign game, two new non-combat ships, six new fighters and two new weapon types – EMP and Flak. In addition, the Sunrunners make use of some of the ships and weapons introduced in *Renegades,* and the book includes stats and ship readouts for them.

Choosing between *Sunrunners* and *Renegades* isn't easy. Both books follow a similar format and offer similar information, albeit concerning different areas of space. The new weapons on offer here are slightly more complex, but offer more potential for new strategies and tactics than *Renegades.*

Score 7/10

Warhounds £9.95

With the basic *Silent Death* rules, battles are limited to clashes between starfighters and the slightly larger gunboats. The *Warhounds* supplement offers new rules introducing Escort class vessels – Corvettes, Frigates and Destroyers – to the game.

Escorts are the largest warships generally used in the *Silent Death* universe. In most ways they are treated similarly to Gunboats, but take up two hexes and can mount far more powerful weapons. Escorts also have impressive point-defence systems and expanded electronic warfare systems, as well as several other unique features.

***Warhounds* includes full rules for the use of Escort class ships, including a full design system, six pre-designed ships and several scenarios. The book adds a fair bit of complexity to the *Silent Death* system, but it's well worth the effort – these large ships add a whole new level to the strategy and tactics of the game.**

Score 8/10

Blood Dawn

A roleplaying game **£14.99** **Optimus Design Systems**

001 716 839 1716 **Out now**

The post-apocalyptic roleplaying game makes a comeback.

As well as the traditional elements of post-apocalyptic games, *Blood Dawn's* background also includes hints of alien conspiracies and time travel, just to keep things interesting...

For some time in the 1980s one of the most popular genres for roleplaying was the post-apocalyptic future. *Aftermath, Twilight 2000, Gamma World,* even *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* were all set after a Third World War, and all very popular systems. Then, towards the end of the decade, the genre seemed to die a quiet death for no apparent reason.

So *Blood Dawn* managed to spark a pleasant rush of nostalgia for me. The game is set in a future America, 60 years after an abortive Third World War. Although both the US and Russia managed to down the majority of the weapons launched through the use of 'star wars' defence systems, enough got through to devastate the entire world, throwing the survivors into a new Dark Age.

Now, slowly, civilisation is being rebuilt by the 'pure' humans living in domed cities. In the wastes surrounding the reclaimed lands live mutants and outcasts of all varieties. Believing themselves to be the 'chosen ones', the pure-breed humans of the cities have undertaken a policy of genocide, killing or enslaving any mutants they find, lest their gene pool become 'polluted'.

In response, a number of secret underground cities, built long before the war, have opened their doors to mutants of all types. This 'Underground Collective' believes that the humans of the domed cities are foolishly committing the same mistakes that lead to the war, and that the civilisation they are building is doomed to the same fate. In an attempt to stop this from happening, the Collective has chosen certain mutants and humans to act as 'Prophets'. These individuals are genetically enhanced and cybernetically augmented, provided with basic equipment and sent out into the world in groups known as 'Cabals'. Their task is to seek out and unify the peoples of the waste, take the Earth back from those who destroyed it, and build a new civilisation.

"If you're prepared to do a fair amount of work, there's a playable system hiding somewhere in this book."

As you've probably guessed, player characters in *Blood Dawn* are Prophets, and the group will normally be members of the same Cabal.

Blood Dawn characters are created with a points-based system. The first 130 points are split between eight vital statistics – Strength, Manual Dexterity, IQ, Agility, Constitution, Guts, Intuition and Charisma. For normal humans, these statistics range from 1 to 20, but the alterations made to Prophets by the Underground Collective allow their stats to range as high as 30 (although every point above 20 costs double – so a Strength of 24 costs 28 points). The vital statistics define several aspects of a character, and provide modifiers and bonuses to skill checks.

Once the stats have been picked a 'race' is chosen, which may grant special powers, innate skills and other abilities. Then the player has 2,000 points to spend on skills, unique mutations, 'magical' abilities and equipment.

The rules are based around a 20-sided dice system. Characters have a based chance of 10 to complete most tasks, adjusted by a relevant skill (ranging from 1 to 20, with starting characters having no skills higher than 6), an attribute modifier,

and a difficulty modifier as adjudicated by the ref. Rolling less than the target number is a success – rolling more is a failure.

At its core, then, *Blood Dawn* has quite a lot going for it. The background presents an interesting take on an under-utilised genre, and the Underground Collective concept is as good a justification as any for a varied group of characters to work together. Likewise, the basics of the rules are fairly simple and straightforward.

What really lets the game down, though, is its presentation – not in terms of the book's design or layout, which is nicely done, but in terms of the organisation of the information. Or rather, the almost complete lack of organisation. Hardly any aspect of *Blood Dawn* is easy to get to grips with. Rules are introduced seemingly at random, and rarely in the section that you expect to find them. The background is confusingly presented, with loads of historical information coming before any explanation of what the game is about or what the player characters are supposed to be doing.

The chapter dealing with combat is a good (or should that be bad?) example. For a start it's entitled 'Rules', rather than 'Combat'. It then begins by telling you that combat in *Blood Dawn* is fast-paced and deadly, with bullets being rare and archaic weapons being the norm. Then, without any overview of the system or step-by-step explanation of the combat sequence, come the rules for drawing a weapon. Then comes initiative, which seems straightforward until you realise that the rest of the combat rules refer to how long it takes to do things in seconds (or segments, which are never clearly explained), and initiative is rarely mentioned. The rest of the chapter follows a similar vein, with rules being described seemingly at random, and some surprising omissions – damage, for example, is not clearly explained at any point in the chapter.

Now assuming you've played a few roleplaying games, and are prepared to put a bit of work in, none of these problems are insurmountable. Most of the time the rules are actually present, just not where you'd expect, or can be inferred with little difficulty. Likewise, reading the entire book does make the setting a little clearer. But the fact is, if *Blood Dawn* had been better organised in the first place, none of this work would be necessary. You can't escape the feeling that the guys at Optimus have a good understanding of the system, but just haven't managed to get this across in the book. In many ways, it reads like the notes of a home-grown system devised by a ref for his or her own games – having come up with the basic rules, they don't write them down in a clear order, but make notes of the more complex bits and numbers that would otherwise be easy to forget.

I must admit to enjoying *Blood Dawn*. If you're prepared to do a fair amount of work, there's a playable system with an interesting background hiding somewhere in this book. Unfortunately, that's not good enough for a published roleplaying system these days.

Andy Butcher

And the players said...

IAN: "There's some interesting stuff here, but you have to put in a lot of work."

EM: "It's nice to see a new post-apocalyptic game. Pity it's so badly organised."

NEIL: "A confusing mish-mash of ideas and concepts that just didn't work for me."

Score 5/10

As well as choosing a character's 'stable mutation', players in *Blood Dawn* can also select a variety of unique mutations for their characters, some good, some bad. The bad mutations give extra points to spend on skills and equipment.

Mutant mayhem

Players in *Blood Dawn* may choose to be a human character, or a member of one of several 'stable' mutations that have developed since the war...

Albino Giants: Standing nearly eight feet tall, Albino Giants are descended from Northern European humans affected by a retro-virus released in the war. The virus mutated their DNA, vastly increasing the size and activity of their pituitary glands and leading to massive growth. Their accelerated growth and the effects of the virus shortens their life expectancy.

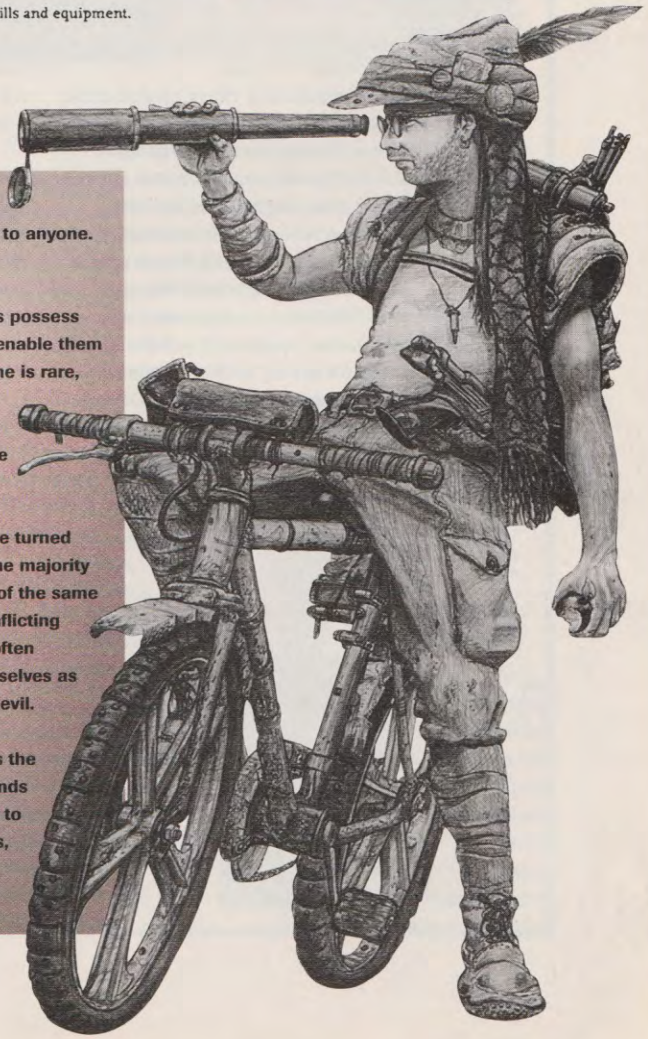
Druids: These were also mutated by a retro-virus. They see themselves as protectors of nature, living in harmony with the life around them. They are divided into two main groups – the Forest Druids, who heal the damaged land and make it fertile again, and the Storm Druids, who defend nature from harm.

Ghouls: Purple-black, lizard-skinned and heavily muscled, Ghouls are the product of the fallout from the nuclear war – near-humans adapted to living in the landscapes of the waste. They are among the most persecuted of the stable mutations and are seen as being the Devil's servants, their taste for human flesh not endearing them to anyone. Nonetheless, Ghouls are great survivors.

Healers: Highly regarded mutants, Healers possess mental powers and medical training that enable them to treat the sick. In a world where medicine is rare, and disease runs rampant, Healers dedicate their lives to helping others. Most are pacifists, but will fight in defence of those unable to protect themselves.

Anti-Healers: A group of Healers who have turned away from the selfless path followed by the majority of their kind. Anti-Healers possess many of the same powers as Healers, but are as skilled at inflicting harm as they are of treating it. Although often seen as evil, many Anti-Healers see themselves as agents of justice, killing those they deem evil.

Witches: They appear human, but possess the power to manipulate energy with their minds and perform 'magical' feats. Witches tend to organise themselves into secretive groups, meeting away from prying eyes, in which they learn and practise their powers.



Chaos Progenitus

A collectable dice game | 13 dice starter box | £TBA | Destination Games

001 414 723 8709 | Out in October

Hideous monsters clash in the first release from Destination Games...

One of last year's surprise hits was *Dragon Dice* from TSR, the first collectable dice game (see **arcane** 1). Now Lester Smith, the original designer of *Dragon Dice,* has set up a new games company along with Tim Brown (of *2300AD* and *Traveller* fame) and released his own collectable dice game, *Chaos Progenitus.*

Aside from the fact that it's a dice game, though, *Chaos Progenitus* is very different to *Dragon Dice.* Whereas the latter game portrays battles between whole armies with each die representing a single soldier, in *Chaos Progenitus* each player controls a single monster, with the dice representing parts of the beast. The objective is simple – defeat the other player's monster in one-on-one combat.

Each monster is made up of 13 dice, which in turn are split into two main categories, body and equipment. The body dice define the creature itself – arms, legs, tails, tentacles, spines, wings and so on – while equipment dice represent weapons and armour that the creature uses in combat – swords, maces, shields, magic wands and more.

The game is played in turns, with an initiative roll to determine which monster goes first. Each turn you roll all the dice available to you, then assign blocks to the opponent's attacks, assign your own attacks, and finally take damage from any unblocked hits. As you take damage you must select body dice to be removed from play. The game continues until one player cannot roll any body dice at the start of a turn, at which point the opponent wins.

The colours of the dice and inks represent different 'breeds' of monster. By building a monster with no dice the same, half of a single colour, or all of the same colour you can create mongrel, half-breed and pure-breed monsters, each gaining special abilities.

In creating *Chaos Progenitus,* Lester Smith has learnt several lessons from *Dragon Dice. Chaos Progenitus* is a simpler, fast-moving game that can be learnt in about five minutes and played in 20, and the rules are much clearer. In many ways it's similar to *Lunch Money* from Atlas Games (**arcane** 8) – a great 'beer and pretzels' game with an evocative atmosphere.

There's a lot of strategy involved in building your monster and many different approaches to playing the game itself. Different combinations of body parts offer different tactical possibilities, resulting in monsters with a variety of strengths and weaknesses. The flexibility offered by the dice means you can have fun recreating your favourite monsters from fiction.

With *Chaos Progenitus,* then, Lester Smith has not only designed a great game, but also proved that the collectable dice format has at least as much potential as the collectable card game.

Andy Butcher

Score 8/10

A Hero's Tale

A collection of short scenarios for *AD&D*

£7.99 | TSR | 01223 212517 | Out now

All referees know very well that using filler scenarios – short scenarios which serve to break up a campaign – is a good thing. It stops the party thinking that every scenario is somehow linked into the great, all-encompassing plot which forms the crux of the campaign. This is especially true in mammoth campaigns such as *Night Below* (**arcane** 2), or *The Rod of Seven Parts* (see page 62 of this issue).

A Hero's Tale is a collection of ten filler scenarios, each one between five and eight pages long, and ranging in character strength required from 1st level right up to 10th. The scenarios are not too complicated, mainly because of their brevity, and could perhaps be described as little more than encounters. Still, each one is good – there's not a duffer throughout the collection – and I'm sure referees will end up using each and every one of them.

Where this collection of scenarios is especially clever, though, is in the way they're all linked together, however tenuously, to form a complete mini-campaign in their own right. There's a hidden plot burbling away in here, which concerns an artefact called the Waning Star. Throughout the scenarios the characters bump into NPCs who are looking for this artefact, and feel its influence. Whether they actually guess what's afoot, however, is unlikely until towards the end of the collection.

So, a worthy bunch of short scenarios which should fit into just about any ongoing campaign. Oh, and the title, in case you were wondering, derives from passages of monologue at the start of each scenario spoken by Thad Bravencloke – a chap who's been through all of this long, long ago.

Paul Pettengale | Score 8/10

Star Wars Live Action Adventures

A live-action roleplaying system

£13.95 | West End Games | 001 717 253 6990 | Out now

I will say one thing for this book: it contains an excellent introductory freeform scenario. The plot is basic – ten characters meet on a Tantooine sand-barge in order to bid for a plot device, currently in the possession of a criminal mastermind. However, it is embellished with a large number of excellent twists and turns. The criminal has hired a gunman to defend him. The gunman is horribly disfigured as a result of a gun fight with a mercenary named Kempo. Guess which mercenary is now working for the Rebel Alliance? This is an object lesson in how to write a freeform plot, and the character sheets are some of the clearest I've seen.

However, the scenario takes up less than 30 pages of the book. Most of the rest of the space is given over to a rules system. Freeform games require simple rules, and *Star Wars Live Action* attempts to use a cut-down version of the RPG rulebook, complete with force points, dark side points, difficulty numbers and dice. Yes, you read that right. Dice. The introduction makes a great deal of the "realism" of live-action gaming. "You are there," it says, "in that dim corridor, with a blaster heavy in your sweaty palm, shooting it out with two Imperials."

It could have added, 'and then, to add to the realism, you freeze the action, roll one dice for initiative, another to see if you hit, a third to see how much damage you take, and then repeat the process.' The introduction also says, "You aren't sitting around a gaming table," but, if combat and task resolution is going to devolve into a dice game, you might as well be. This definitely isn't live-action gaming in any sense I understand.

And that's a real shame, because this is a good idea, just badly fumbled.

Andrew Rilstone | Score 6/10

Fritz Leiber's Lankhmar:

The New Adventures of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser

A roleplaying game based on *AD&D* £11.99 TSR 01223 212517 Out now

And with a single bound Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser were free.

But as any truly dedicated fan of Fritz Leiber's *Lankhmar* novels will know it won't be long before these swaggering rogues fall foul of another evil plot, dusky maiden or extra strong ale, and are in great peril once more. The intoxicating mix of big names and big city makes this an ideal starting point for new gamers. The heroes are solid role models for players to follow, while this archetypal fantasy city is easy for novices to picture mentally. Add to this a set of 'simplified' *AD&D* rules, a starter adventure and a wodge of background information on fantasy's greatest (if most error-prone) double-act, and you've got what could be a perfect set of 'trainer wheels' for any wannabe adventurers out there.

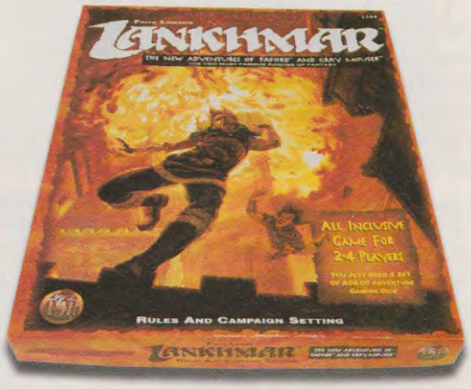
Lankhmar is designed to introduce players to the joys of roleplaying. It aims to strip away the more involved rules to leave a leaner, faster and more approachable game that can be played by pretty much anybody. Indeed, the box proudly boasts that all you need to play are pencils, paper and a standard set of *AD&D* dice. This is factually true, if a little optimistic – there's a huge amount of reading to do before any dice will be rolled.

What will drag both referees and players through their respective tomes is the free-wheeling, 'devil may care' spirit of adventure that underpins the whole Fafhrd and Mouser myth. These boys are thieves, cuckolds and suckers who spend as much time leaping from bedroom windows as they do righting wrongs or fighting horrific beasts. It is this instinctive sense of action that these abridged rules try hard to foster with the introduction of Luck dice and petitioning DMs to be just a little less lethal.

The action is compressed by this large but comprehensible city. Lankhmar is the kind of town you expect to find in fantasy, packed with cults, guilds, markets and honest-to-goodness intrigue. Most importantly, the names are pronounceable and the district system logical, which enables players to gain a geographical grasp of the world they now have the opportunity to explore.

And such orientation is vital if players of *Fritz Leiber's Lankhmar* are to have fun because, while simplified, the rules will still be far more complex than any conventional game they'll have played before. The balance that has been struck between ease of play and enjoyable complexity almost works, but the monumental *AD&D* rules system does not reduce easily. So, *Lankhmar* is still packed with proficiencies and modifiers, which means that many players will spend far more time scouring their character sheets than the streets of the city.

The above-mentioned problems are compounded by the necessary brevity of the rulebooks and player guides. These have to be brisk, but this often leaves complicated concepts only functionally explained. Which is fine if you get the point first time round, but if you don't then there's precious little support material available and few examples to help you get to grips with how it all works.



As a result *Lankhmar* will prove frustrating for game groups composed solely of beginners. However, it will be perfect for any *AD&D* players who fancy cutting their teeth as a DM, or for experienced DMs who want to initiate a new circle of friends to roleplay. In these cases their familiarity would definitely be enough to carry the party through the inevitably testing start-up and into some seriously rollicking, relaxed and relatively rule-free adventures.

Trenton Webb

Score 7/10

Portfolio of a Dragon: Dunkelzhan's Secrets

A sourcebook for *Shadowrun* | £8.99 | FASA | 001 312 243 5660 | Out now

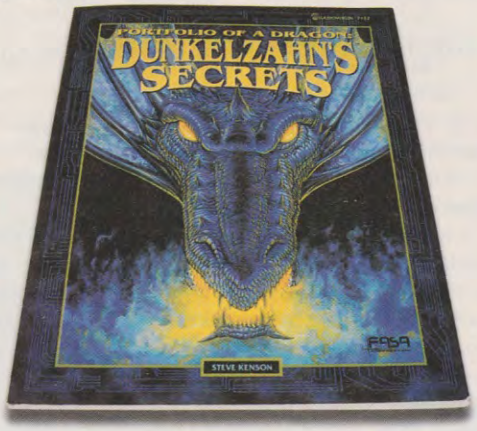
Great Dragon and UCAS President Dunkelzhan is dead, but his legacy lives on...

For the past six months election fever has hit the Sixth World of FASA's *Shadowrun* roleplaying game, as the United Canadian and American States presidential candidates fought it out for the 'hearts and minds' of the people. As detailed in the adventure collections *Super Tuesday* and *Shadows of the Underworld* (**arcane** 7 and 10 respectively), the election has affected every aspect of the gameworld.

Decided by the votes of *Shadowrun* players, the winner was the Great Dragon, Dunkelzhan. But on the night of his election, the new president was assassinated while leaving a party. *Portfolio of a Dragon* details the events of that night and its impact on the world of *Shadowrun*, including the publication of the dragon's legacy in the form of his Last Will and Testament, a document with the power to change the world forever.

As with all *Shadowrun* sourcebooks, *Portfolio of a Dragon* is presented in the form of an electronic document posted to the Shadowland Bulletin Board System, complete with notes and additions from various denizens of the Sixth World.

As well as an in-depth look at the assassination and a copy of the dragon's Will, the book contains investigations into different aspects of both. It quickly becomes clear that Dunkelzhan would allow nothing, not even his own death, to interfere with his plans – his Will not only makes good reading,



but its provisions ensure that the Dragon continues to call the shots from beyond the grave.

Portfolio of a Dragon is one of the most accomplished sourcebooks for *Shadowrun* in some time. It's a perfect example of how major events beyond the scope of the players' control can have very real effects on their characters' lives, but at the same time allows referees a great deal of control over how they integrate the changes into their individual campaigns. The Dragon's death and his Will both provide vast amounts of potential for adventures of all kinds – whole campaigns could evolve from a single part of either – and the fallout can also up the stakes for the players. Now more than ever, the decisions the players make and the jobs they take will have impact on the state of the world they live in. At the same time, though, the book gives refs a great deal of freedom in deciding how much of the material to use. Even those *Shadowrun* players who aren't keen on high-powered magic and immortal beings will find lots of stuff here that can be used without upping the power level of their games.

As discussed in 'The Power and the Glory' (page 24), politics can be a powerful tool for the ref of any roleplaying game, and few sourcebooks illustrate this as well as *Portfolio of a Dragon*. Any *Shadowrun* ref will find this a fascinating read and a highly useful source of inspiration and ideas.

Andy Butcher

Score 9/10

Chromebook 4

A supplement for *Cyberpunk 2020* | £5.99 | R. Talsorian Games | 001 510 549 1373 | Out now

Hey man! I got what you need... Looking for the latest cyberoptics from Kiroshi, a cyberlinked bike which can leave the NCPD in the dust, or a cheap Soviet cyberarm to replace the one you lost on your last black op? Well look no further. *Chromebook 4* continues the outstanding line of home shopping guides for *Cyberpunk 2020*.

As with the previous releases in this series, *Chromebook 4* presents *Cyberpunk* players with a wide variety of cybernetics, nanotech, vehicles and much more. Designed as a marketing brochure, this supplement provides full game mechanics and costs for each item, plus a hard sell which makes you want to have it.

It's good to see that *Cyberpunk* hasn't fallen into the trap of just providing more and more guns in each release. *Chromebook 4* has a wide range of civilian vehicles, new and untested cyberware, plus a neat section on 21st century fashion – if you want to act like a killer, then you'd better dress the part.

There's not much wrong with *Chromebook 4*. Given a book full of new tech, no self-respecting edgerunner is going to turn down the opportunity to improve themselves and beat the competition. Welcome to the edge man, just don't forget your credit card.

Alex Bund | **Score 8/10**

Heroes' Lorebook

A sourcebook for *Forgotten Realms* and *AD&D* | £11.99 | TSR | 01223 212517 | Out now

The *Forgotten Realms* campaign is the most popular setting currently being played. Because it's been around for so long, and there have been so many novels written off the back of it, there are a *huge* number of heroes wandering the Realms. TSR has now gone about the herculean effort of cataloguing the lot and giving them stats, belongings and character summaries.

There are some 60 heroes fleshed out throughout the 160 pages, including all of the names which you'd expect to see there such as Elminster, Laeral Silverhand and King Azoun Obarskyr IV. After the stats

for each character, proficiencies, equipment, magical items, combat tactics, companions, enemies, appearance, personality, location, history, motivations, campaign uses and sources (for further reading) are discussed at length.

After this, there are sections which detail the special magical items which the heroes possess, and specialist spells which are mentioned throughout the book.

Although this is a highly polished collection of characters, and the background detail is interesting for any fan of *Forgotten Realms,* one has to wonder at the actual use of it. If you were planning to introduce one of these ultra-powerful characters into your campaign, surely you could make up the stats yourself, and it's unlikely that you're ever going to use more than half a dozen of these characters. So, great in theory, but in practice I think it's a rather pointless exercise.

Paul Pettengale **Score 5/10**

The Fall of Terra

A supplement for *BattleTech*

£6.99 **FASA** 001 312 243 5660

Out now

For centuries, ComStar controlled all interstellar communication in the Inner Sphere. However, the return of the Clans and its war to liberate Earth forced ComStar to open up the organisation to the scrutiny of the Successor States. To many, this was welcomed, but to certain factions only one word described the reforms… heresy! Within an organisation which had stood undivided for centuries, a schism occurred, shattering ComStar and beginning a war with the planet Earth.

The Fall of Terra gives *BattleTech* players the chance to fight through the deciding battles which took place between the forces of ComStar, and those of The Word of Blake, the ultra-orthodox faction dedicated to destroying the process of reform within ComStar. Detailing 16 missions, both for *BattleTech* and *MechWarrior,* it provides background info and unit data for the forces which took place in these battles. Details are provided for the organisation of both ComStar and The Word of Blake's armed forces, plus new BattleMechs, and info regarding the personalities of the war.

For those who relish the chance to battle across the Earth, this is an excellent supplement. Praise be The Word of Blake.

Alex Bund **Score 8/10**

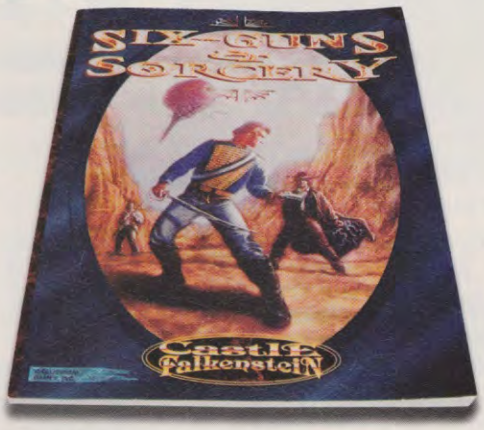
Six-Guns & Sorcery

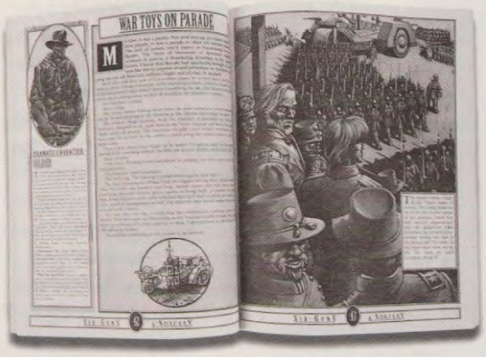
A sourcebook for *Castle Falkenstein* £11.99 R. Talsorian Games

001 510 549 1373 Out now

Tom Olam goes state-side to bring that uniquely Falkensteinian flavour to the wild west.

If you're tired of quashing the evil plans of necromancers, bored of picking up that all-too-familiar battle axe or laser rifle to go off on some quest or another, then *Castle Falkenstein* is for you. Set in an alternate Victorian age of faerie and steampunk technology, *CF* is refreshingly different and offers a welcome break from stereotypical medieval fantasy settings.





Six-Guns and Sorcery maintains the trend of sourcebooks formed from the memoirs of prominent characters by continuing the exploits of Tom Olam – a computer game artist sucked into this alternate world – as he travels to America.

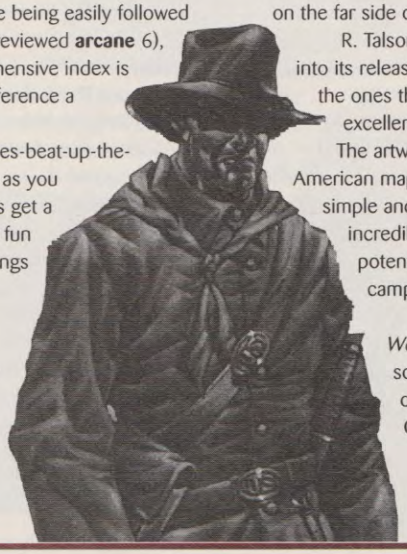
As the story unfolds relevant game information is detailed as and when new areas are touched on. Such a structure results in this volume being easily followed and, unlike *The Book of Sigils* (reviewed **arcane** 6), thankfully an excellent, comprehensive index is included making subsequent reference a simple matter.

The story is a clichéd heroes-beat-up-the-world-and-rescue-the-girl affair, as you would expect from *CF,* and does get a little too much at times. But it is fun and depicts characters and settings of the new world well.

The true strength of the sourcebook, however, is in expanded options for character creation. There are 22 new Dramatic Characters detailed from Ex-Confederates to Aero Pirates and Shamens, each exactly capturing the Wild West flavour. Two new abilities and rules for gunslinging duels bolster American characters, together with a uniquely American sorcerous order – the Spellslingers who use cursed, magically enhanced weapons firing lightning bolts!

Players succumbing to the lure of North America will find a world broken into five powerful areas, all vying for dominion over the continent. *Six-Guns* contains not only general information, but social, law, armed forces and transportation details on each of these areas together with prominent characters and powerful magical legends.

Six-Guns has all the general information that a referee needs to stage an American chapter of the great game. However, *Comme Il Faut* (another book for *Castle Falkenstein)* is also required because it contains statistics for all the equipment that can be found on the foreign shores, and *The Book of Sigils* contains in-depth information on the sorcerous orders scheming on the far side of the Atlantic.



R. Talsorian must put a great deal of thought into its releases for *Castle Falkenstein* because all the ones that I have seen so far are of an excellent standard. *Six-Guns* is no exception. The artwork is excellent (although the American map is a little confusing) and the layout is simple and well prepared. The information is incredibly detailed and has enough games potential for referees to plan entire campaigns on the continent.

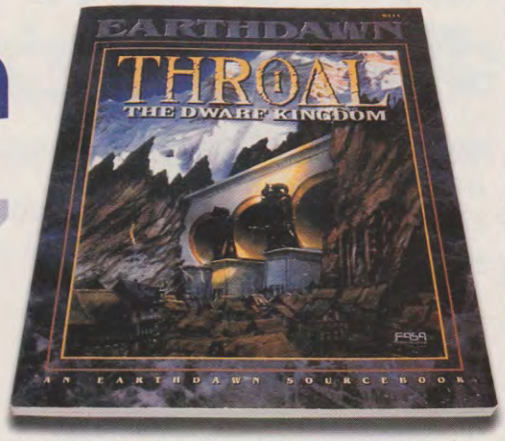
Tombestone meets *Dances with Wolves* with a *James Bond* flavour in this sourcebook, which is worth a look if only to broaden the horizons of the Great Game.

David Cornford

Score 8/10

Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom

A sourcebook for *Earthdawn* £11.99
FASA 001 312 243 5660 Out now



Explore the centre of culture, learning and politics in the land of Barsaive...

In the history of Barsaive, the mythical land that forms the setting for FASA's *Earthdawn* roleplaying game, no group has been as influential as the dwarfs of Throal. Since the end of the Scourge, Throal has been central to the rebirth and rebuilding of the entire land, uniting the various peoples in their struggle to reclaim what was lost.

Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom takes an in-depth look at both the history and current events of Throal, with an eye towards running campaigns based in and around the Kingdom. The book is split into chapters, each dealing with a different aspect of the Kingdom.

After the intro, Welcome to Throal gives an overview of the Kingdom. This is followed by The History of Throal, which begins before the founding of the Kingdom, and covers all the major events up to the present day. The third chapter, Trade, looks at the economy of Throal, and how it affects commerce across Barsaive. The next two chapters, The Halls of Power and The Threads of Unity, deal with the royal family and politics of Throal. Next comes Culture, which details the attitudes of the population and looks at the centres of learning, arts and sports, and the followings of the Passions. The next three chapters cover different areas of the Kingdom – Throal itself, Bartertown and the mountain settlements – including major places and people of interest. The last chapter discusses running adventures and campaigns in Throal, and includes three adventure outlines. The book closes with a table of characters, glossary of Throalic words and an index.

Weighing in at 184 pages, *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom* is a hefty piece of work. However, it's this very size that is both the book's greatest strength, and the key to its problems. On the good side, this book contains just about everything you'll ever need to run whole campaigns set in Throal. There's a lot going on in Throalic politics at the moment, and the setting is ready-made for campaigns concentrating on power groups struggling for supremacy. Likewise, the depth on offer makes Throal an ideal site for a city-based campaign. Once you've read this book you'll be able to wing any number of encounters with little preparation.

Having said that, the question of just how much you need to know about Throal does arise. If your players just pop into the Kingdom every now and then, a great deal of this book is going to be wasted on you. Likewise, *The Dwarf Kingdom* alludes to some major changes in the world of *Earthdawn*, and any ref who wants to keep their campaign tied to the FASA timeline would be advised to buy it for that reason alone.

This is a good book that's just a bit too large for its own good. If you want to set a campaign here or fancy involving your players in the politics of Barsaive, this is a must. Those wanting a simple overview of the Kingdom, though, will be overwhelmed with detail.

Andy Butcher

Score 7/10

Terranovan Technology

A sourcebook for *Heavy Gear*
£11.99 Dream Pod 9
001 514 523 1350 Out now

Dream Pod 9's previous material for the *Heavy Gear* universe has been notable for the strong sense of background and high attention to detail. In a gameworld of high-tech hardware which appeals to science fiction technophiles this is a must, and this new book ups the level of definition once again.

Those looking for number-crunching rules will find them here, as will those after background substance, but the book is neither wholly one nor the other. The intro mentions that the guide sprang from chapters that wouldn't fit in other supplements, and it retains a bitty feel.

Roughly two-thirds of the book is rule-less tech files. Each component of the game's *Heavy Gear* mecha is examined and explained, as are some of the other technical aspects of the Terra Nova gameworld, such as medicine, military hardware and war tech. The remainder sets out to clarify the game's complex vehicle design rules, which despite a good try still leaves them heavy on the maths. There's a complete list of vehicle Perks and Flaws, expanded rules for ammunition types, repair, salvage and modification info, a couple of new skills, some NPCs and robots, and rules for cybernetic implants.

Terranovan Technology is modular, and therefore a ref without it won't be left behind in future. The supplement's best strength is probably as a referee aid – it's much easier to explain to a player how he took a APFSDS round in the knee actuator by pointing it out on a blueprint.

Jim Swallow Score 6/10

Albion

A roleplaying game for the PC
£44.99 Blue Byte
01604 232200 Out now

Something of a curious beast, *Albion* is a new computer roleplaying game from Blue Byte, a German software company best known for the *Battle Isle* series of wargames. It casts you as a shuttle pilot working for a megacorporation of the future. Survey probes have discovered a barren world rich in natural resources, and your starship is sent to investigate and set up processing facilities.

On arriving at the planet, however, you find that far from being the lifeless rock the probes reported, it's teeming with

life, including several sentient races. When your shuttle crashes on the planet, you find yourself stranded and unable to contact your ship, and are plunged into this strange world in an effort to survive.

Albion is an enjoyable game which features a number of interesting quirks. The first is the somewhat strange blend of high technology your character brings to the world and the more traditional fantasy elements (including a wide variety of magic) that are present on the planet. Likewise, the game switches between an isometric, overhead view and first-person, 3D sections depending on where you go and what you do.

Graphically it's an impressive game, with some well-drawn maps and interesting characters, all of which is complemented by fairly good sound effects. It's also very large, with a wide range of areas to explore, people to deal with and tasks to complete. *Albion* isn't going to change your views of computer 'roleplaying' games, but if you are able to put up with the restrictions of the genre, this is a fine example of the form.

Andy Butcher **Score 7/10**

Shadows of the Empire Sourcebook

A *Star Wars* RPG supplement
£13.95 West End Games
001 717 253 6990 Out now

Another novel, another sourcebook. This one is set in the gap between *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, and focuses on an intrigue in the Emperor's court. There's this crime lord named Price Xizor, beside whom even Jabba the Hutt pales into insignificance. He is also an up and coming agent of the Emperor. Darth Vader slaughtered Xizor's family, for adequate reasons, so Xizor is plotting to kill Luke Skywalker and make it look as if it was Vader's fault, and thus supplant Vader as the Emperor's chief servant.

There may be people out there who will find this sourcebook interesting. Some gamers may be curious to see characters from the novel translated into game terms, if only so they can be amazed that →

Star Trek: The Card Game

A collectable card game 65 card starter deck £TBA
15 card booster pack £TBA Esdevium Games
01252 26116 (UK distributor)

Just how does the second *Star Trek* card game compare to the first?

It's taken some time, but finally a collectable card game derived from the original *Star Trek* has arrived. Based on the first season of the show, this basic set enables you to recreate the episodes of that series, and features all of the crew, enemies and missions encountered.

The aim of *Star Trek: The Card Game* is to gain Experience Counters and award them to your crew. The first player with 25 counters awarded wins. Decks are made up of four basic types of card – Crew, Episode, Challenge and Wild. Crew cards represent, well, crew members, ranging from Sulu and Scotty to the wonderfully expendable 'red shirt' Security teams. Episode cards are split into three types – Mission, Plot and Discovery – and are played to recreate episodes of the show, or to generate new stories. Challenge cards represent the obstacles and enemies that the crew must overcome in order to complete an episode. Finally, Wild cards represent a range of equipment, luck and long-lasting effects.

As well as a random selection of cards, every starter deck contains four Core Crew cards – Kirk, Spock, McCoy and the Enterprise – and a set of default Episode cards (Mission, Plot and Discovery).

The game is played in turns, and the aim is to play a Mission card, followed by at least one Plot card and finishing with a Discovery card, which together represents an episode. After each card is played, the opponent may play Challenge cards in an attempt to prevent you from completing the episode. If you defeat all the Challenges, you gain Experience Counters as detailed on the Mission, Plot and Discovery cards played.

CORE CREW
Captain James T. Kirk™
Commanding Officer
MISSION
EPISODE: "The City on the Edge of Forever"
The U.S.S. ENTERPRISE™ discovers a gateway to any time or place.

Star Trek: The Card Game is a well-designed game that's not only fun to play, but also manages to capture some of the atmosphere of the show. The rules are very clearly written, although there's a tendency to repeat vital information in order to clarify sections, making the game seem more complicated than it actually is – only when you sit down and play do you realise how smoothly and easily the game flows. The cards themselves are attractive, all featuring stills from the series, and although some are of questionable quality this is forgivable when you consider the age of the originals. They could, however, have been a little better finished and perhaps a but sturdier.

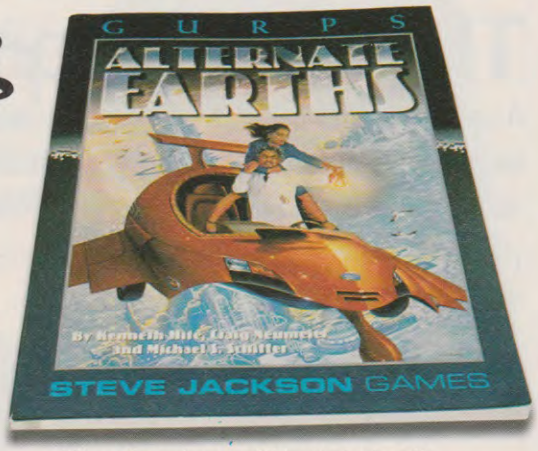
Likewise, the mechanics of the game are sound, and it encourages a limited form of storytelling during play. The problem with the game, though, is that the fairly rigid structure does limit deck design and strategy to an extent. It's fairly easy to theme the challenges in your deck (Paul's 'Space Babe' deck, for example, which relies on tempting the crew from their mission, or my 'Klingon Invasion' deck). But the rest of a deck is much harder to alter in any significant way.

Nonetheless, this is a fun game that works well. It may not have quite enough depth to maintain your interest for extended play, but it's a great way to pass an hour or two when you don't feel up to anything too competitive, and as such you'll probably find yourself coming back to it again and again.

Andy Butcher

Score 7/10

GURPS Alternate Earths



A sourcebook for *GURPS*

£11.95 Steve Jackson Games

001 512 447 7866 Out now

six parallel worlds to explore and police.

Alternate Earths provides a series of backgrounds for the interdimensional Infinity Patrol campaign from *GURPS Time Travel*. Herein players are I-Cops, members of an élite police unit which patrols the differing levels of quantum reality, fighting a secret war with a far-distant alternate Earth regime called Centrum. While the framing material of the supplement leans towards the official *GURPS* line, any ref inspired into running a world-hopping campaign by the article in **arcane** 10 (Infinite Earths) has ready-made material right here. There's no provision for providing info on the hows and whys of interdimensional travel – *Alternate Earths* simply gives you six parallel worlds to do with as you please.

The other Earths provided are all based on adjusted historical models. There are no really wild variations, such as populations of intelligent, evolved dinosaurs or planets on which the laws of physics don't apply. Instead, the six Earths are different enough to be full of potential, but similar enough for player characters to jump in with relatively little preparation.

Two of *Alternate Earth's* three writers are qualified historians, and their skills get a real workout. Dixie is the dream holiday spot of any disgruntled Confederate American, a world where the outcome of the American Civil War went the other way and the North American continent is split down the middle, with nuclear-armed Blues and Greys engaged in their own Cold War.

Reich-5 is the classic 'what-if?' story example, an Earth where the Nazis won the Second World War. The chilly realism of some of this chapter is quite disturbing, and the idea that the Nazis might start dimension-hopping is a great scenario hook.

Roma Aeterna is another old chestnut, this time a world where Rome never fell. The history is a little more complex on this one, but it paints a parallel divided between the tender mercies of an undying Imperial Rome and the rampaging hordes of Kubla Kahn's descendants.

Shikaku-Mon is one of the more original ideas, where a change in 16th century Spanish royalty has created a cyberpunk world ruled by Christian Japanese and Totalitarian Swedes!

Ezcalli follows the same lines as Roma Aeterna, substituting the Romans for Aztecs. The streets run red with the blood of human sacrifices, and while history buffs will balk at the unrealism of the Aztec culture's survival, the rougher points are smoothed over with some deft writing.

Finally there is Gernsback, named after pulp sci-fi originator Hugo Gernsback. This Earth's development was thanks to futurist scientist Nikola Tesla, and it's an Art Deco funfair with technology straight from *Flash Gordan*, all flying cars and ray-guns.

Each chapter gives us a fresh Earth presented in a common format. Sections include a political world map, a history, a list of important locales, details of technology and society, ideas on character types and adventure seeds. While the material inside *Alternate Earths* could be created by any ref with time to study, that luxury isn't often available, and this book makes a fine resource.

Jim Swallow

Score 7/10

→ Guri, Xizor's assassin and bodyguard, has 10D Martial arts. There will certainly be people who want their *Star Wars* PC to have a ship like Guri's Stinger – some of them may even care about the modifications that Lando has made to the Millennium Falcon. Some refs may find Xizor's criminal organisation, The Black Sun, a useful source of plots. Others may have lost their copy of the *Star Wars Sourcebook* and will therefore find a use for yet another listing of game statistics for Luke, Chewie, Vader and all the other major characters.

It's possible that some people will find that information about the Emperor's throneworld, to say nothing of a description of the castle which is Darth Vader's home, does not diminish the magic of the *Star Wars* mythos. If, and only if, you are one of those people, you might enjoy *Shadows of the Empire*.

Andrew Rilstone **Score 5/10**

Naval Battle Rules

A supplement for *AD&D Birthright*

£7.50 TSR 01223 212517 Out now

Naval forces are a vital part of any ruler's military – not only for warfare and conquest but for exploration and trade, so it was a little surprising that they weren't included in the basic *Birthright* boxed set. Rectifying this omission, *Naval Battle Rules* brings would-be rulers back up to speed with 51 naval war cards, together with rules on general and magical maritime warfare, movement and hazards on the open seas, and details of various trade routes.

As one would expect the rules are detailed and comprehensive, and mesh well with the existing land combat system. They also expand *Birthright* into an exciting new area – whether for seafaring, adventuring or ocean-bound conquest – offering a great deal of potential for both players and referees alike.

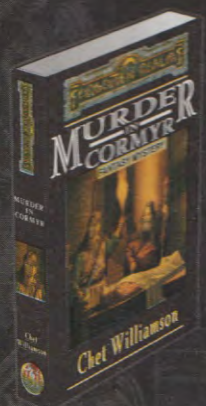
But these rules are not new. *Cities of the Sun* was an early *Birthright* boxed set which contained everything here and info on the lands of the Khinasi, in much the same way as *The Rjurik Highlands* (**arcane** 9) described that area of the *Birthright* world, and it was only £12.99. It's difficult to recommend *Naval Battle Rules* when, for an extra £5.50, you can get the same rules and war cards, plus a detailed look at an interesting area of the *Birthright* world.

David Cornford **Score 4/10**

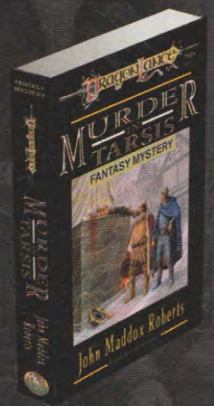
A HERO IS MURDERED!

Murder in Halruaa
by Richard S. Meyers
On Sale in October
ISBN 0-7869-0521-2
Sug. Retail $18.99;
CAN $23.99; £10.99 U.K.
TSR #8657

Murder enters the most popular fantasy worlds ever!



Murder in Cormyr
by Chet Williamson
On Sale Now
ISBN 0-7869-0486-0
Sug. Retail $18.99;
CAN $23.99; £10.99 U.K.
TSR #8655



Murder in Tarsis
by John Maddox Roberts
On Sale Now
ISBN 0-7869-0500-X
Sug. Retail $18.99;
CAN $23.99; £10.99 U.K.
TSR #8656

Great fantasy novels sell. Great murder mysteries sell. And the same market buys both genres. That's why TSR chose the Mystery Writers of America's Edgar Award nominees Chet Williamson, John Maddox Roberts, and Richard S. Meyers to blend the two genres, weaving webs of deceit in TSR's most popular fantasy worlds.

Book Three finishes the series with an unlikely ne'er-do-well mistaken for a legendary wizard hero—a hero that was just murdered! Now Pryce Covington must solve the murder or be the next victim, setting aside the fact that impersonating a wizard is itself punishable by death!

A deadly new series for 1996!

Contact your Random House Merchandise Group Represenative to order, or call 1-800-733-3000 or fax 1-800-659-2436.

® and ™ designate trademarks owned by TSR, Inc. ©1996 TSR, Inc. All rights reserved.

BOOKSTOP BOOKSHOP
Specialist Dealers in
Out-of-Print & Secondhand
ROLE-PLAYING
WARGAMES & MAGS
REGULAR CATALOGUES ISSUED
Send SSAE for Mail Order List
11 MAYFIELD GROVE, HARROGATE,
N. YORKS HG1 5HD Tel. 01423-505817

PROJEKT PAINTING
Fast, effective, professional, painting service.
Any and all SF, Fantasy miniatures completed to the highest standard.
Exceptional rates.
Tel: (01772) 468495

KNIGHT ERRANT GAMES
Knight Errant Games
(1FL) 5 Barclay Place
Tollcross
Edinburgh
EH10 4HW
Tel: 0131 228 3179

PRESENTS FOR SALE BY MAIL

Role-playing games, collectable card games, board-games and accessories... expanding all the time for your gaming needs.

Magic™ singles available. Rares & U1's - £2.50, Uncommons £1.00, Commons 10p.

For a *FREE* fully illustrated mail order catalogue, phone or send an A4 SAE to the above address.

Please mention this advert in your reply.

ITEM	Price per pack	Price per box
MTG 4th Edition Starters	£6.00	£52.50
MTG 4th Edition Boosters	£2.00	£58.00
MTG Ice Age Starters	£6.00	£52.50
MTG Ice Age Boosters	£2.00	£58.00
MTG Alliances	£1.60	£60.00
MTG Fallen Empires	£0.75	£50.00
MTG Chronicles	£1.60	£65.00
MTG Homelands	£1.00	£57.50
Net Runner Starters	£12.00	£65.00
Net Runner Boosters	£2.00	£60.00
~~Mythos Starters~~ out of stock	£6.00	£52.50
Mythos Boosters (any)	£2.00	£60.00

Plus a wide variety of other CCGs, RPGs and board-games.
Phone orders welcome – evenings only.
Minimum orders £10 – all carriage £1

Bazaar Trading
Collectable Card Games

	STR	BOOST
Mirrage	5.50	1.70
Netrunner	11.50	1.80
MTG 4th/Ice	5.50	1.70

Mail order a pleasure
HUGE RANGE OF MTG SINGLES AVAILABLE
At some of the BEST PRICES in the UK
Many other C.C.G's & Accessories.
Write/Phone/Fax/EMail for FREE CATALOGUE.
Ross MacGregor, 26 Haig Crescent, Dunfermline, Fife KY12 OBD
Tel/Fax: 01383 737805
WEB PAGE
http://web.ukonline.co.uk/Members/ross.m2/bz.htm
(all in lower case except M of Members)
EMail: ross.m2@ukonline.co.uk

the Gameskeeper
Since 1981, Oxford's specialist stockist of the best in ❖ RPGs ❖ Boardgames ❖ CCGs ❖ Wargames
Visit us at 105 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1HU
9.30-5.30 Mon-Sat Tel: 01865 721348
Or send an A5 SSAE for mail order lists

Over the last 20 years

SPIRIT RACING AND ENTERTAINMENT has become SPIRIT games

In recent times, as others have turned to comics, computers and collectibles, we have stayed a GAMES SHOP, with a full range of RPGs and support material. Of course, we'll happily sell you Magic, Jyhad, Star Wars etc. too. We are at 98 Station Street, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs DE14 1BT. Tel: 01283 511293. Open 10-6 Tues-Fri, 10-5 Sat. Mail order welcome, please send an A4 SSAE with 49p stamp for our catalogue.

DELTA MasterCard Access VISA

LINGARDS GAMES

Middle Earth LIMITED edition Starters	£9.99
Box of 10	£89.00
Wizards Boosters	£2.99
Box of 36	£99.00
Dragons Boosters	£2.35
Box of 36	£79.00
All orders add p&p	£1.00

Cheques, POs, cards accepted - Visa, Mastercard, Switch.
Lingards Games, 24 Sir Isaac's Walk, Colchester, Essex CO1 1JJ
Tel: 01206 574781

The Guild of Melee & Magic
LONDON'S PREMIER GAMING CLUB
FIVE MEETINGS THROUGHOUT LONDON
See small Ads or phone
0181-715 8675
for more details

XL Games Limited
2/1, 41 Reform St, Dundee DD1 1SH
Tel: (01382) 200 626 Fax: (01382) 206 650

	St.	Bo.
Star Wars Ltd.	£5.49	£1.89
Magic 4th	£4.99	£1.49
X-Files	call!	call!

Send Order With Cheque/PO
Cheques payable to XL Games Ltd
P&P 10%, Min. Order £7

THE BATTLE ZONE
Specialist in Wargaming and Roleplaying Games
The Battle Zone
58 Boutport Street
Barnstaple
North Devon
EX31 1SH
Tel/Fax: 01271 321344
NORTH DEVON'S LEADING GAME CENTRE
10% off all TSR products.
Mirrage, Star Wars and X-Files please ring for prices
Don't forget FREE postage and packaging
We now accept credit card orders

LEISURE GAMES
91 BALLARDS LANE
FINCHLEY LONDON N3 1XY
0181 346 2327
0181 343 3888 (Fax)
OPEN 6 DAYS A WEEK 9.30am-6pm
Access VISA
CLOSE TO FINCHLEY CENTRAL UNDERGROUND (NORTHERN LINE)
MAIL ORDER WELCOME
PLEASE SEND STAMPED SAE FOR LIST
(4 IRCs OVERSEAS)
PLEASE QUOTE ARC. 3
We are NORTH LONDON'S most completely stocked specialist Adult games shop

FULL RANGES IN STOCK:
AVALON HILL, CHAOSIUM, COLUMBIA, DARK TOWER, F.A.S.A., FLYING BUFFALO, FRESNO, GAMES WORKSHOP, GIBSONS, G.D.W., G.M.T., HERO, ICE, LEADING EDGE, LIVINGSTONE, MAYFAIR, MILTON BRADLEY, OMEGA, PALLADIUM, RAVENSBURGER, F.X. SCHMID, STANDARD, STELLER, STEVE JACKSON, R. TALSORIAN, TASK FORCE, TSR, VICTORY, WEST END, WHITE WOLF, WIZARDS OF THE COAST, WORLD WIDE WARGAMES, X.T.R., AND MANY MANY MORE...

PLUS FIGURES BY:
CITADEL, MITHRIL, MINIFIGS, RAL PARTHA AND RAFM.

COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION BOOKS INCL.:

AUTHORS:
DAVID EDDINGS, TERRY PRATTCHET, RAYMOND E. FEIST, J.R.R. TOLKEIN, H.P. LOVECRAFT, MICHAEL MOORCOCK, PIERS ANTHONY, ROGER ZELEZANY, AND MANY MORE.

SERIES:
DRAGONLANCE, FORGOTTEN REALMS, RAVENLOFT, SPELLJAMMER, DARK SUN, SHADOWRUN, BATTLETECH, TORG, ETC.

WE STOCK AN EXTENSIVE RANGE OF ROLE-PLAYING AND WARGAMES MAGAZINES INCL.:

DRAGON, DUNGEON, THE UNSPEAKABLE OATH, CHALLENGE, INTERFACE, WHITE WOLF, PYRAMID, VALKYRIE, TALES OF THE REACHING MOON, GAMES GAZETTE, HARNLORE, STRATEGY & TACTICS, THE GRENADIER, COMMAND, EUROPA, THE GENERAL, AND MANY MORE.

PLEASE ASK ABOUT OUR SELECTION OF BACK ISSUES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS SERVICE.

COMICS UNLIMITED
BATTLEBORG HUBS
MAIL ORDER
4 CLAIR COURT
LIME STREET
BEDFORD BEDS
MK40 1NH
please send sae for our latest catalogue stating which catalogues you would like
GAMES MANGA SCI-FI COMICS

GREEN ANGEL CARDS & GAMES
34 Charles St, Kettering, Northants NN16 9RN (Mail Order Only)
Thousands of singles for over 60 CCG's & Expansions
Magic, Star Wars, ST: TNG, Middle Earth, Mythos, Vampire, Netrunner, Spellfire, Shadowfist, Doomtrooper, Dr Who, Rage, Guardians, Kult, Overpower, James Bond, Wyvern, INWO, Sim City, On the Edge, Bloodwars, Ultimate Combat, Last Crusade, Star/Guardians, Towers in Time + others.
For details send a large (A4) SAE stating interests.
(Just in: Mox Jet, Mox Sapphire, Time Walk, Gauntlet, Ali + others)

The Games Cave
Central Scotland's Premier Games Shoppe
Fantasy & Sci Fi Wargames, RPGs, Cards, Miniatures & Accessories
★ NOW IN ★
Warhammer 5th now in stock - single magic cards
Upstairs at Europa Music, 10 Friars Street, Stirling
Tel/Fax (01786) 448623

PATRIOT COMICS
183 Lower Ground Floor, Castle Market, Sheffield S1 2AH ✶ Tel: 0114 2731 762
email: 100545.1104@compuserve.com
comics • trade paperbacks
trading cards • CCGs
card supplies
We have boxes & packs, not to mention thousands of CCG singles available, from Magic, Star Wars, ME:TW, Heresy etc. All at great prices!
We mail order cards all over the world, so wherever you are, give us a try
VISA MasterCard

To advertise in the classified pages of
arcane
Adrian Hill
on 01225 442244, ext. 2180.

to advertise call adrian hill on 01225 442244 ext 2180

DISCOVER THE WIDER WORLD OF PLAY-BY-MAIL

ENJOY IT – OR IT'S FREE!

Over 250 games are waiting for you! Over 100 UK moderators offer a huge range of fantasy, SF and war games to play by mail, with personalized reports for every player each turn! You can enjoy adventures as you've never known them before – and with FLAGSHIP magazine's amazing offer you've no risk at all.

Just send £10 for a trial 4-issue subscription, and we'll send you our SuperCoupon worth £10 of playing in any one of a huge range of great games – with a description of each game to help you choose. And if you don't enjoy the magazine, tell us after one issue and we'll cancel the sub and return the £10 – but you've still got the SuperCoupon to use as you like!

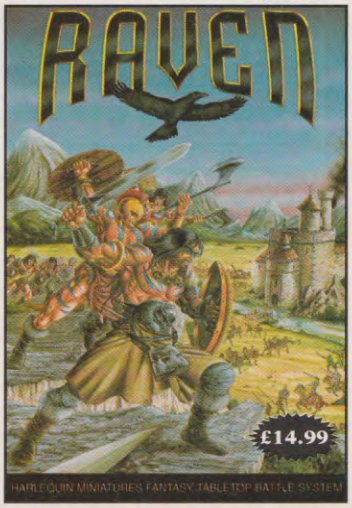
No hassle – if you say you're disappointed, that's good enough for us. But we're betting that you *won't* be disappointed – because the world of postal fantasy games is the most exciting gaming scene today!
So either you get a magazine you enjoy *and* an exciting new hobby, or it costs you nothing. Try it today!

To get your TRIAL SUBSCRIPTION, send your name and address with £10 to:
Flagship, Arcane Offer, PO Box 39, Exmouth, Devon EX8 1YN
Phone/Fax 01395 276632. E-Mail 76370,3220@compuserve.com

HARLEQUIN MINIATURES

Latest Releases

1009 SKELETON SOLDIERS (3)	£2.99	7124 GIANT SPIDER (1)	£5.99
1099 SKELETON CAVALRY (1)	£3.50	7125 TREEMAN (1)	£9.99
1911 SKELETON ARCHER (5)	£3.99	7126 MINOTAUR WARRIOR (1)	£5.99
1941 WOOD ELF ARCHER (5)	£3.99	7303 BEASTMAN CROSSBOWS (3)	£2.99
1948 HIGH ELF ARCHER (5)	£3.99	7902 KUSTOSS SIEGE CATAPULT & CREW	£14.99
1964 LESSER GOBLIN SPEAR (10)	£3.99	7903 GIANT CHIMERA (1) (BOXED)	£14.99
1967 NIGHTLING SWORD (5)	£3.99	8114 HELSING PIKEMEN (3)	£2.99
1970 LIZARDMEN CROSSBOW (5)	£3.99	8197 HELSING MOUNTED KNIGHT II (1)	£3.50
2301 BARNORSK ORC WARRIORS (3)	£3.99		
2302 BARNORSK ORC FIGHTERS (3)	£3.99		
2303 BARNORSK ORC GUARD (3)	£3.99		
2304 BARNORSK ORC HEROES (3)	£3.99		
2305 BARNORSK ORC WARRIORS II (3)	£3.99		
2306 BARNORSK ORC ELITE (3)	£3.99		
2307 BARNORSK ORC FIGHTERS II (3)	£3.99		
2308 BARNORSK ORC ELITE II (3)	£3.99		
4005 WOOD ELF ARCHERS II (3)	£2.99		
4006 WOOD ELF FIGHTERS (3)	£2.99		
4007 WOOD ELF ARCHERS III (3)	£2.99		
4107 SHADOW ELF BALLISTA & CREW (3)	£4.99		
6201 NIGHTLING FIGHTERS (3)	£2.99		
6202 NIGHTLING WARRIORS (3)	£2.99		
6203 NIGHTLING RAIDERS (3)	£2.99		
6204 NIGHTLING VETERAN RAIDERS (3)	£2.99		
7013 LIZARDMEN BLADEMASTERS (2)	£2.99		
7111 PEGASUS (1)	£5.99		
7122 GIANT MOUNTAIN TROLL (1)	£9.99		



HARLEQUIN MINIATURES
Unit S3, 632 Radford Road,
Nottingham NG7 7EX
Tel: 0115 9422289 Fax: 0115 9422298

The Trading Post

WEREWOLF

10% off all Werewolf products at your local Trading Post

(not to be used with any discount)

CARDIFF	READING	NOTTINGHAM
Trading Post	Trading Post	Trading Post
8 Duke Street Arcade	6 Bristol & West Arc.	48 Friar Lane,
Cardiff	Reading, Berks	Nottingham
CF1 2AZ	RG1 3EX	NG1 6DQ
01222 343 818	01734 502 082	0115 924 2381

Mail Order is available from all our shops, please contact your nearest Trading Post for details.

FANTASY PRODUCTS

ARE YOU AS PREPARED AS HE IS?!!

SCI-FI
WARGAMES
FANTASY ROLEPLAY
TRADING CARDS
MINIATURES

Leading MAIL ORDER SPECIALISTS

MYTHOS. MAGIC The Gathering STAR WARS CUSTOMIZABLE CARD GAME

PO BOX 14, ARUNDEL BN18 0TX
Tel: 01903 734070
Switch, MasterCard and cheques
Please send a stamped A4 SAE for full catalogue

Access VISA

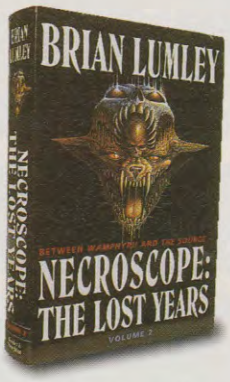
to advertise call adrian hill on 01225 442244 ext 2180

The Great Library

Yet another bag of books to set your brain cells bouncing...

Necroscope: The Lost Years – volume II

by Brian Lumley Published by New English Library
Hardback £16.99 Out now



Here is the culmination of ten years' work which began with the publication of *Necroscope* in 1986 and now runs to a series of five books. They say you either love it or hate it, or you've never heard of it. I've always thought it was all right.

At this, the beginning of the end, Harry Keogh's problems remain unsolved. His life has changed drastically after assuming the mortal coil of the brain-dead Alec Kyle. He can't complain, it was either a new body or the grave, but now his wife has disappeared with their kid, understandably perhaps, given the confusion she must have been going through. While looking for her, Harry gets together with a 200 year-old vampire thrall, whose master, a werewolf, has lain licking his wounds, after having been on the receiving end of an ancient blood feud with the other three Wamphyri who were banished with him to this world centuries ago.

"But wolf, bitch, girl or some sort of weird mixture – whatever it was – it stood on its hind feet, George, upright! Now how can ye explain that?"

Fortunately for Keogh, the Wamphyri believe him to be the innocent Alec Kyle, and not a necroscope (which he is) and so not possibly the one thwarting their minions' attempts to finish off the werewolf before he recovers (which, of course, he is). An uncanny string of coincidences.

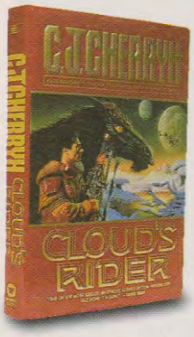
This is a refreshing vampire fantasy, and rather scary, too. If you've not read any *Necroscope* books before, you would be better off starting at the beginning – there are basic assumptions that have to be taken on board before these works can be appreciated. However, if you have little difficulty in suspending your disbelief when reading dark vampire fantasy, you could equally start here, at the end. After all, that's a beginning, too.

Jonathan Palmer

Score 7/10

Cloud's Rider

by C J Cherryh Published by Warner Aspect
Hardback £16.99 Out now



Sequel to last year's *Rider at the Gate*, in *Cloud's Rider* Cherryh returns to the distant planet where groups of colonists struggle to carve out a life from a beautiful but dangerous world. Although the land is rich and fertile, nearly all the native creatures are capable of projecting telepathic images that can drive a person insane in minutes. Forgotten by the rest of humanity, the colonists rely on the Riders, rare men and women capable of bonding with a Nighthorse for their survival. The telepathic bond between the two protects the Rider from the influence of the other wildlife, enabling them to travel between settlements – the only way that the colonists can trade and communicate. The Riders and their horses are both respected and feared, for a rogue Nighthorse is a vicious killer.

Cloud's Rider tells the tale of a young Rider, Danny Fisher, and his Nighthorse Cloud. To begin with they escort the survivors of a village attacked by an insane Nighthorse to another settlement, but end up fighting to save another village from a similar fate.

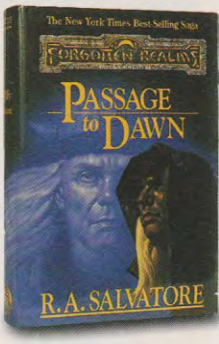
"<Snow and cold. Evergreens.> And something – Something that was <hunger> and <threat> and <bite.>"

Cloud's Rider is an accomplished book. The story is both tense and interesting, and the beautifully crafted world stands out as one of the most original creations in some time – any referee thinking of creating a new setting for their gaming can learn a great deal from Cherryh's work. Unfortunately, *Cloud's Rider* does suffer from 'sequelitus', in the sense that unless you've already read *Rider at the Gate* you'll have a tough time working out what's going on here. Still, a damn fine book, and yet another reason to read *Rider at the Gate*.

Andy Butcher Score 7/10

Passage to Dawn

A *Forgotten Realms* novel by R A Salvatore Published by TSR
Hardback £13.99 Out now



Bucking the Prince, Princess and Dragon rescue trend, *Passage to Dawn* tries to add the extra element of mystery to the adventure by withholding the identity of the victim. So, where more traditional tales focus on the link between rescuer and abductee, this story drags its heroes the length of the Forgotten Realms on a mission to save somebody. They're not exactly sure who, but someone needs rescuing and there's a good chance of a ruck, too.

"Drizzit was willing to believe, but his scimitar, forged to destroy such creatures of fire, most certainly was not."

This plotline employs an eclectic cast who seem bound by *AD&D* reality when it suits them and liberally free of it when the plot gets out of hand. Drizzit, the star, is a male Ranger with a fondness for sunrises and the open sea, while the wizard Harkle Harpell behaves exactly as described in the *Forgotten Realms* expansion set *The North*, but his unbridled power and sudden appearance is, sadly, anything but convincing.

Together with dwarven-raised humans, barbarian friendly halflings and kind-hearted pirates, the characters do their damnedest to add gusto. But while this makes individual encounters fun, it begins to pull the weak plot out of shape. What starts out as a pirate chase turns into a treasure hunt, which leads the crew to a far away lake and back up north for a final showdown with a Balor.

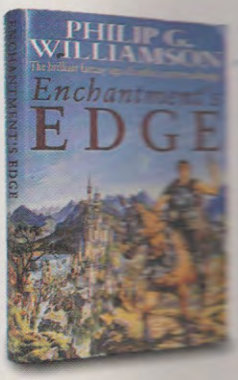
The result is a vaguely interesting tale which leaps between locales and characters for its own benefit rather than the reader's. All too often, your

concentration is shattered by the introduction of Drizzit's essays on life, a sudden change of tack, or the arbitrary introduction of superfluous characters. There are some neat set-pieces but they just don't hold together.

Trenton Webb Score 4/10

Enchantment's Edge

by Philip G Williamson Published by Hodder & Stoughton
Hardback £16.99 Out now



With the endless flow of schlock fantasy that one has to deal with when reviewing novels for **arcane**'s Great Library, it's all too easy to become jaded. Thankfully, we have books such as *Enchantment's Edge* to provide a much-needed rejuvenating tonic.

This is a tale that draws on the traditions of high fantasy, with magical forces seeping in from a forgotten land, half-man beasts invading a peaceful realm, and kings and princesses getting involved in an increasingly unstable political situation. And yet, the fantasy is underpinned by the author's solid understanding of the human psyche, which he blends with the drama to create a thoroughly magical, though innately human book.

"'I – I do not know what happened,' she said, but in her mind a single thought resounded: I have been to Enchantment!"

The result is easy to read, because the complexities are not to be found in the prose itself, but in the relationships that the characters have with their environment and the forces at work there. You have the somewhat naive Issul, a princess, who is struggling to come to terms with the changes that are taking place in a land which she was brought up to think idyllic; and the sagely Leth, a king whose grip on all that is his is slowly slipping – two characters to which the author introduces you in such a way that you genuinely feel for them.

Enchantment's Edge gets my wholehearted recommendation. And the great news is that this is the first volume in a series. I look forward to reading the rest.

Paul Pettengale Score 9/10

Desperation

by Stephen King
Published by Hodder & Stoughton
Hardback £16.99 Out now

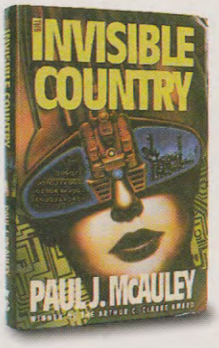
As the backs of both *Desperation* and *The Regulators* (reviewed on page 82) proclaim, "The world's most terrifying writer gives birth to twins". The 'most terrifying writer' bit is a matter of taste, I suppose, but there's no denying that Stephen King has written not one but two new novels, *Desperation* and its unidentical twin, *The Regulators*, which is written under his old pseudonym, Richard Bachman.

"This stuff – raw tissue from the big cop's throat and sinuses – hit the windshield... The smell was awful."

Desperation is set in the small town of the same name, in the middle of nowhere in the American mid-west. A bunch of people travelling along the nearby highway are captured and imprisoned by a local cop, and things start to go downhill for them from then on. Recent work at the nearby China Pit strip-mine has opened a collapsed mineshaft dating back to the Old West, and something nasty has been released.

The Invisible Country

by Paul J McAuley Published by Victor Gollancz
Hardback £16.99 Out now



Paul J McAuley is beginning to make something of a name for himself in cyberpunk literature. Unfortunately, because he's writing in English at the end of the millennium, that's probably how his work will be classed, although not all of the stories weaved together here can properly be described as such. Yes, McAuley owes a lot to Gibson, but, partly through being English and a fiercely political animal, he is also indebted to Orwell and Huxley, while Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and the Moorlocks from H G Wells' *The Time Machine* also play sizeable parts in the development of *The Invisible Country*.

"A sarcastic heightening of the brutalization of society which occurred under the mob-handed free market rule of Thatcherism."

The author has added notes to each chapter, in an attempt to explain them. He even has good friend Kim Newman write his profile as a foreword, but one of McAuley's engaging aspects is that you never know where he's going to take you next. There are a variety of apparently unrelated settings, between which you can switch as if they are TV channels. The storylines all fit together through recurring motifs and the social comment which constantly underpins the surface.

McAuley looks very much towards Europe. We see a lot of England and Holland here, and are forced to consider the consequences of what's happening in this particular part of the world – there's no question of simply brushing the message aside as being from some crazy Hollywood future that none of us will ever have anything to do with. But, while the political comment is distinctly post-Thatcherite Britain, much of the effect of what he's talking about is certainly global, and this makes his work transcend national frontiers.

This is the author's first outing since *Fairyland*, which I preferred, but it is still a good book, made all the more commendable for its timely comment on the global fragmentation of our society. If you're hoping to bring *real* politics into your campaigns, as inevitably you must, there are some interesting angles for consideration here.

Jonathan Palmer

Score 8/10

In many ways, *Desperation* sees a welcome return to form for Stephen King, who's recent works have tended to meander somewhat between horror and thriller, often being over-long and somewhat dull to read. This book, however, builds nicely from a vague sense of unease into out-and-out unpleasantness, complete with mass murder, snakes, spiders, ancient evil and a fair splattering of visceral scenes. It has to be said that the direction of the plot is a little obvious, and the story relies on the *deus ex machina* of a kid with a direct line to God. However, such is the unfailing strength of King's description that these drawbacks are not problematic enough to ruin what is undoubtedly an extremely readable and gripping book.

Andy Butcher Score 8/10

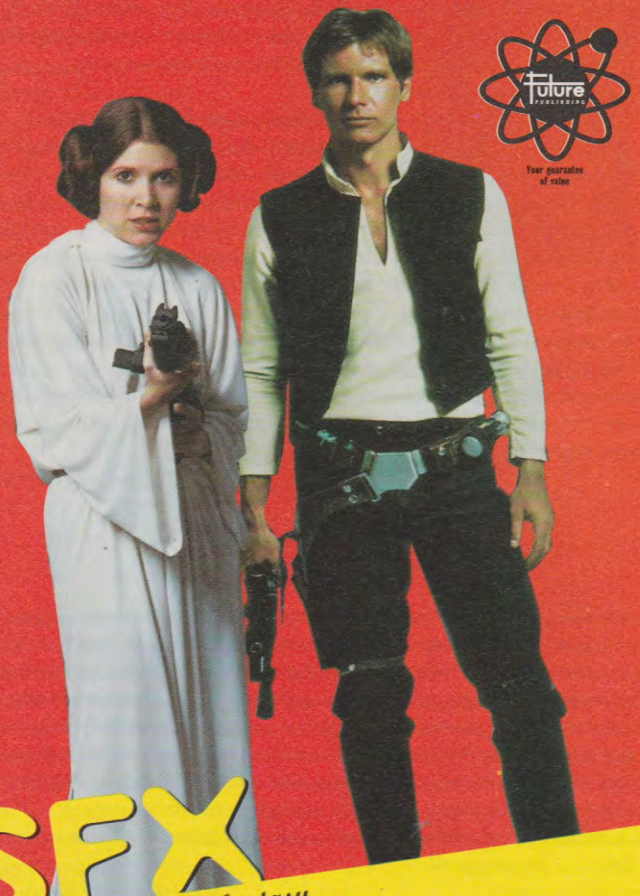
Move aside, rebel scum – it's time for the next generation...

STAR WARS IS BACK!

With the remixed, hip-hop version of the original trilogy coming out next Spring, and the new trilogy scheduled for '98, SFX separates the rumour from the facts about what George Lucas is up to...

Plus!

Exclusive Mark Hamill interview *Babylon 5*'s Jerry Doyle mouths off J Michael Straczynski on arc stories John Carpenter on *Escape from LA* *Dragonheart* director Rob Cohen *The Phantom* a flop?



Future Publishing Your guarantee of value

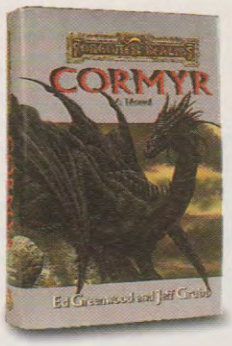
SFX

The SF fan's ultimate fantasy

ON SALE NOW!

Cormyr

A *Forgotten Realms* novel by Ed Greenwood and Jeff Grubb Published by TSR Hardback £13.99 Out now



At the heart of this novel is an ordinary but affable tale of a conspiracy in the court of Cormyr. Woven in and around this is a series of stories set throughout the history of a kingdom, from the days of its foundations up to the date of the main story. We are told of the growth of an encampment of men in a forest glade into a nation; we are told of the village leaders from whom spring a line of kings. Then there is the myth of the forest itself – the abode, in turn, of dragons, elves and men. The myth of the dragon – a potent symbol at TSR – pervades all of Cormyr's proud past.

The chapters which tell of these deeds of long ago succeed far more than most game tie-in novels, in that they add not just flesh and structure to a campaign setting, but a sense of warmth towards the place, as well. The words of Tolkein and Leiber, for example, transport you to a magical world, while it is more difficult for a book based on a game to do so. *Cormyr* manages it, though, with much aplomb, making this a valuable aid to those who might wish to adventure in such a land. For here you not only have a location, but a whole history.

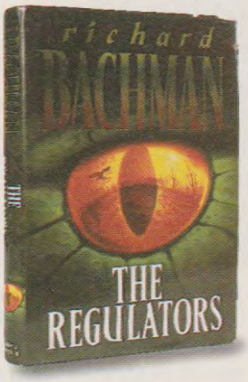
It's all told at great speed, flicking from age to age like a book of short stories with a common thread. As such, it works really well. Sure, it's sometimes pretty cheesy fare, but what did you expect – Dickens?

Gideon Kibblewhite

Score 7/10

The Regulators

by Richard Bachman Published by Hodder & Stoughton Hardback £16.99 Out now



The Regulators (written under Stephen King's pseudonym) has a different style to King's normal work. Set entirely on one suburban street in the small town of Wentworth, Ohio over the course of a single day, it is a much stranger tale than *Desperation,* and the limited environment leads to a tighter, more focused story.

It's a normal summer's day on Poplar Street, and the residents are going about their lives as usual. But the arrival of a red, chrome van changes things drastically – the street comes under siege from a bizarre group of old western stars and life-size cartoon characters, all with large guns.

The main characters are almost the same as those in *Desperation,* but now they're neighbours and have known each other for years. Likewise, the evil force behind the events has the same source as that in *Desperation,* but has travelled to this normal street. *The Regulators* and *Desperation* are different versions of the same idea, with the links between them being the characters and the evil force intent on their destruction – they don't take place in the same continuity.

Of the two books, *The Regulators* is my favourite, being the more imaginative. On the other hand, dedicated King fans will probably prefer *Desperation.* Either way, both are good, enjoyable books.

Andy Butcher Score 8/10

Take it BEYOND THE SHADOWS...

...With the SHADOWRUN COMPANION™

NOT YOUR AVERAGE RULES EXPANSION

JACK INTO HTTP://WWW.FASA.COM

FASA PRODUCTS ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH *HOBBYGAMESLTD.* FOR MORE INFORMATION, WRITE TO *UNIT S4, RUDFORD INDUSTRIAL, ESTATE, FORD AIRFIELD, NR. ARUNDEL, WEST SUSSEX, BN18 OBD, U.K.* OR CALL: *(0) 903-730998.*

FASA CORPORATION

Shadowrun® is a Registered Trademark of FASA Corporation. *Shadowrun Companion*™ is a Trademark of FASA Corporation. Copyright © 1996 FASA Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

arcane scribblings

As the evenings start to draw in and we edge steadily towards the winter months, it seems you've got more time to send us your thoughts...

Dear arcane,
It has to be said, your magazine is still suffering from padding. The margins are somewhat large, the pictures are put on the pages for no apparent reason – this is especially true of your features.

"Your magazine is still suffering from padding."

For instance, your horror and time travel features in **arcane** 7, and your war feature in **arcane** 5, were little more than general ramblings followed by a 'for more information' box which pointed people to relevant books and films. In my opinion, this section in each was the only really useful bit. Within my gaming circle there are experts on all of these things, so the features were pretty much useless.
Peter Bernard, Garleston-on-Sea

Few of us are lucky enough to have experts on a variety of topics (such as, er, time travel, war and horror) in our gaming groups, so I feel that such 'inspirational' features are worthwhile in the pages of **arcane**.

As for the design of the mag – we're redesigning the layout of **arcane** *next month, which will make space for many more words, without compromising what I firmly believe is an extremely high artistic standard.*

Dear arcane,
Despite teaching tolerance between gamers, religious zealots and the general public, your 'Famous for 15 Minutes' column in **arcane** 11 revealed some of your own misinformed bigotry.

MENSA membership is limited to people of high intelligence who have scored well in an IQ test. While there are élitist types within MENSA, there are also gamers who insist on telling everyone out there that they started roleplaying in 1974. Almost all large groups have egotists among their ranks, and MENSA is no different in that respect.
Mark Byng, Portsmouth

I wonder if high IQ = no sense of humour? Hmm?

Dear arcane,
I loved reading the series of features you ran on creating your own roleplaying game which finally finished in **arcane** 9. However, it was a great shame that it ended when it did – surely there was more that could be explained, such as how you go about publishing your creations? Could you give me any suggestions on this score? I've written a game which is about aliens invading Earth, based upon realism and combat. If any companies out there are interested, get in touch!
David Horlock, 9 Kings Avenue, Marcham, Abingdon, OX13 6QA

As was explained right at the beginning of the 'Do it Yourself' series, which started in **arcane** *6, the idea was to show you how you could design games for your own use, tailored specifically for use with your regular bunch of players. It was not intended to be a feature on how to go about getting a game published. We will, however, be doing a feature on that very thing in the not-too-distant future – so, have any of you just had a game published and want to tell us all about it?*

Dear arcane,
I have a rules suggestion, which I thought you might like... In the *AD&D Player's Handbook* it quite clearly states that to build a section of wall 10 feet long, 1 foot thick and 5 feet high, would take one day. At first this seemed reasonable, until my flatmate pointed out that in the popular TV comedy *Aufwiedersehn Pet*, Oz, Bomber, Neville and the lads could build a wall that size in a quarter of the time. Now, I realise that medieval equipment was slightly less advanced than it is now, but I couldn't help thinking that my 15th level dwarven warrior with a +4 chisel and three slots in stonemasonry would be far handier than Jimmy Nail when it comes to knocking up walls.

"My dwarven warrior is handier than Jimmy Nail."

To rectify the problem I've come up with the YHTCIH* ruling, which is based on this simple equation:

$$\frac{\text{STR} \times \sqrt{(\text{INT}+\text{DEX})}}{3} \Big/ \log 10\ \text{WIS}$$

Roll against the result on a D100 whenever a wall is built is a hurry. This allows for better wall construction taking longer, and should help to clear up any TV comedy/top fantasy RPG dilemmas your readers may have.
(*You've Had The Cowboys In Here)
Brian Gillatt, Ayr

You'll be a maths student then, with a lot of time on your hands.

Dear arcane,
Just writing to say that I like **arcane**'s systemless and open-minded style; we've had *AD&D* rammed down our throats for so long. Your attitude seems to be: 'it's up to us to make our games fun, don't expect the game designers to spoon-feed this approach or that approach, this new game or that.' I like that, and I liked your features on writing your own games – even if the USA has its way and roleplaying games are banned, if we know how to do them ourselves, they'll never stop us!
Paul Elliott, Canterbury

It's encouraging to receive letters such as yours Paul, and to hear that our approach is appreciated. Thanks.

communication

If you'd like to get in touch with **arcane** *there are several ways. The most traditional is to send us a letter clearly marked '***arcane** *scribblings' and addressed to* **arcane**, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW. *The slightly more technically advanced can send us a* fax on (01225) 465982, *while all you fully-fledged InfoCyberOtakuNauts out there can e-mail us at:*
arcane@futurenet.co.uk *or visit our Web site at:*
http://www.futurenet.co.uk/entertainment/arcane.html.
We look forward to hearing from you.

Character traits

Dear arcane,

Spending hours going through tables and trading off advantages against disadvantages to create a character does not mean that a player is more involved with the character's motives and personality. It simply means that the player is, upon the ultimate death of that character, going to attempt to avoid wasting yet more time creating a new character to play with.

Just because a character has not been thoroughly mapped out by lots of numbers, or lists of capabilities or restrictions, it does not mean that the character is simple or two-dimensional. There is no list of data defining who I am, and yet I am a real, complex personality. Any roleplayer with a modicum of experience should be able to come up with an interesting character in only a few lines of text, and if the player is a novice, then any referee of some years' experience should be able to lend a constructive hand.

Mark Langford, Beccles

We couldn't agree more. Have a T-shirt for your timely wisdom.

Dear arcane,

Being a spod (er, *you said it, not us – ed*), I like playing MUDs over the Internet, and I thought I should applaud you for not neglecting this aspect of roleplaying and including the 'Fire on the Line' feature in **arcane** 11. The article was well written, though I have some additional information that 'newbie' MUDs players should find very useful...

A hugely useful address to check out is Jennifer Smith's MUDFAQ (`http://www.math.okstate.edu/~jds/`) where she presents a comprehensive glossary of terms which are frequently used in MUDs, along with what appears to be a complete list of clients and servers.

Gerard Dunks, York

Thanks for that, we'll check it out ourselves in between sessions logged on to Terris, *the rather brilliant MUD on America On-Line which Andy (in particular) is apparently addicted to.*

Dear arcane,

First of all, it's great to see a magazine carrying serious articles on MUDs. Computer magazines don't like to touch them for a number of reasons (they make lousy screenshots, they have this 'text' stuff in them which is out of date, and not many advertisers are likely to take out an ad in an issue which includes an article on the subject), although the recent issue of *.net* is an honourable exception.

Anyway, there is one point I would like to raise.

You refer to 'MUDs and MOOs'. This is like referring to 'cars and cadillacs' – MOOs form a subset of MUDs. The reason that lots of magazine articles seem to make a distinction is that when people decide to write a piece on the subject, they naturally go to the more social MUDs where they can

> "It's great to see a mag carrying articles on MUDs."

chat to people without having to learn anything much about the game itself. This usually means a MOO (in fact it usually means LambdaMOO!), which of course gives these games an undue prominence in the writer's mind. That's why there are books out there with chapters such as 'MUDs, MUSHes and MOOs', too.

Richard Bartle, e-mail

Well, thanks for that Richard, now we all know the score.

Dear arcane,

I was reading the **arcane** shorts section of your letters pages in issue 11, and I came across the following reply to a letter from Mikko Sarri on freeform gaming: "I see your point, but you don't need to dress up silly for freeform games."

Now, I can't see why, when nearly all of us are looked upon as nerds by the non-roleplaying majority, it is necessary to poke fun at what is a minority faction within our own hobby. Many of the LARPers I know also table-top roleplay, and almost all of them read **arcane**. So why not drop the →

What the *hell* is this?

NEW! T3: THE UK'S FIRST COOL TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE
p98 APS cameras
p102 Home cinema
p106 Mad gadgets
T3
TOMORROW'S TECHNOLOGY TODAY
You're Nicked!
The gadgets they don't want you to buy...
Voltswagon
An electric sports car? No, really – it's red and everything
Objects of Desire
From digital camcorders to crazy hi-fi, T3 is packed full of the coolest gear!
How the Hell...
Do Global Positioning Systems work?
We played with
A 64-bit games machine
Dolby Digital AV amp
Digital Video camcorder
LaserDisc player
Bonkers MIDI hi-fi
APS cameras
and tons more kit...
How to...
Make your £200 speakers sound like they cost £2,000
T3 is: Hi-Fi • Video • Computers • TVs • Videogames • PDAs • Phones • Camcorders • Home cinema and more...

Is it...

A A monthly journal devoted entirely to the very coolest new hardware, gear and gadgets

B A new magazine all about the latest technology and innovations in consumer electronics

C A publication packed with features on everything from home cinema to computers

The answer? All of the above.

T3 is a new magazine dedicated to bringing you the latest news and reviews of technology with the wow factor.
First issue out on October 17.
http://www.futurenet.co.uk/t3.html

T3 TOMORROW'S TECHNOLOGY TODAY

arcane shorts

What we can't crop into short snippets doesn't find its way into this column...

I would be most disappointed to see your book reviews pages go, because I buy far more books than I do games!

Phil Clare

Have no fear, for The Great Library is going nowhere.

Bring back the Hot Metal pages - please!

Sharon

Er, no. Sorry.

In the first part of your 'Alternative Fantasy Settings' I couldn't help but think that the references to spirits and spirit magic sounded just like *RuneQuest*.

Colin Smith

True, but I think they were treated differently.

When, oh when are you going to start covering LARP?

Mike Trump

Next issue - honest!

Do you know when the *Star Trek* CCG is going to appear in the UK? I've got a friend in the States who says he's been playing it over there for almost a month, and he says it's really good.

Peter Micelli

We picked it up at EuroGenCon, and you can find the review in this issue of **arcane** *(see page 75).*

Bring back 'It Was a Time of Darkness', it was funnier than 'Gnome World'.

Sarah Wilcox

No, sorry. 'It Was a Time of Darkness' simply ran its course, though look out for our new comic strip soon.

← somewhat counter-productive, snide remarks and get on with treating LARP with the same amount of respect as you do the rest of the gaming hobby?

Robin Jones, Crawley

Whoops, caught on the hop there, methinks. Yes, hands up, I shouldn't have suggested that LARPers dress up silly. Nothing could be further from the truth (ahem). So, to make amends, we're running a long feature on live-action roleplaying in the next issue of **arcane**. *Check it out on Friday 1st November.*

Dear arcane,

I've been roleplaying for about three or four years, and in that time I've only really played about four game systems. When I started buying **arcane** I found out about other games that I'd never heard of, both new games and older systems. I'm sure there are lots of roleplayers who stick to one or two systems, and never realise that there are other games they might enjoy playing too.

I think this is the one area you have not yet covered in your magazine, a section telling us about existing, popular games - a feature on all of the mainstream games that most people play but some people will not know much about, telling us the games' background, system, strengths and weaknesses. You already have the Retro section which tells us about old games, but what you need is something similar for current games!

> "You need a section telling us about popular games."

Frasher Graham, e-mail

You'll be glad to hear that our cover feature in issue 14 of **arcane** *details the 50 most popular roleplaying games ever – not discriminating between those in print and those which have since fallen by the wayside. We're asking* **arcane** *readers to let us know which ten games you've liked best throughout your roleplaying career – check out the form in the Despatches section to have your say, and to help us create the list of 50 games for our feature.*

Dear arcane,

We feel that a response is necessary to your review of *City of Chaos* which appeared in **arcane** 10.

We object to the tone of the review which is negative and factually incorrect. In the first paragraph you state there are between three and six players, later on you say two and three-player games are more fun – what happened to three to six players? You also totally fail to mention that *City of Chaos* can be played solo.

Martyn Oliver and Colin Thornton, Monocle Games

We always make every effort to be factually correct in our reviews. Factual inaccuracies hamper the authority of a review, and we want **arcane**'s *reviews to be the most authoritative in the business. So, apologies for not stating clearly how many players can be involved in* City of Chaos, *which is, of course, one to six players. We found that two to three-player games are the most fun.*

Dear arcane,

I enjoyed 'The Old New Age' feature in **arcane** 9, but Phil Masters didn't really attempt to explain why technology evolves as it does – because of social reasons...

Take, for example, the idea of an industrial revolution in Roman times. Just why would this occur? Why would the Romans start using industrial techniques when they've got all of those slaves? Roman engineers didn't have to pay slaves, just feed them and maintain a level of welfare which kept them alive. However, in 19th century Britain there were no slaves. Engineers had to pay and maintain their workforce, and this proved to be an economic burden which lead to the development of technology that could replace the need for a large workforce (this meant machines, which marked the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution).

I feel this whole rationalising of the technological advancements in Phil's feature was left out.

Paul Lugton, East Lothian

I think the reason that this kind of rational detail was left out of the feature was because it wasn't in fact meant to be all that realistic. Phil was presenting a few ideas that would result in some fun gaming, and nothing more.

Dear arcane,

I wonder whether you or anyone else might be able to help me with a problem I'm having concerning the former Wizards of the Coast game *SLA Industries*, which is now sadly out of print in this country. As a former writer and contributor for the system, I am trying to find out further information about a rumour I heard that Wizards had finally sold it to an American company, and that it may appear again. This was over three months ago, and I have heard nothing about it since. I am starting to worry that I imagined it! Repeated letters to both the UK and the US offices of Wizards of the Coast have proved to be completely pointless.

> "I am trying to find out about a rumour."

Andrew Langton, Leicester

All we know at the moment is that yes, SLA Industries *has been bought from Wizards of the Coast, though we've not heard of any plans to reprint, or of the production of new material. The moment we find out what's happened to the game, and what the ultimate plans of the concerned company are, we'll cover it in a news feature.*

Has anyone else got any info about this game? If so, then we'd love to hear from you – write to the usual address. It would be a shame if SLA Industries *was destined to be another RPG to bite the dust. We'll pass all info on to Andrew.*

arcane On-Line

Get bang up to date with what's going on at **arcane** *by checking out our Web site. Point your browser at* http://www.futurenet.co.uk/entertainment/arcane.html

What is it that you want from a roleplaying Web site? Is it news of what's going on in the industry, so you can find out what new releases are planned by all the major companies? Perhaps you'd prefer reviews of the latest releases, so you know exactly what to buy and what to avoid. Then again, maybe you're after features on your favourite roleplaying subjects, from pretty well any genre. You'll find all of this on the **arcane** Web site, our 24-hour service which brings **arcane** on to your PC (or Mac, or Amiga, or other nifty machine). And there's a great deal more besides... Check out our reader's contacts section so you can discover who's looking for some gaming action in your area, have your say on our Forum, and, most importantly, find out how you can ensure you get your copy of the paper version of **arcane** every month without delay. I look forward to seeing you on-line.

Paul Pettengale, Editor pettengale@futurenet.co.uk

Web site of the month

Where is it?

http://www.fasa.com/

What is it?

It's the FASA home page, where you can get the low-down on all of FASA's game systems, a release schedule, chapters from some of its novels, and quite a bit more besides.

What's it like?

It's one of the very best company pages on the Web, because it's a whole lot more than a load of marketing blah. Each house game (which includes *Shadowrun*, *BattleTech*, *Earthdawn* and others) gets a sizable chunk of Net space dedicated to it, where latest developments in the gaming world are discussed and forthcoming products previewed (the latest Big Thing to hit the *Shadowrun* world is the death of Dunkelzahn – read the review of the associated scenario pack on page 72 of this issue).

The rest of the Web site is made up of a product listing (so you can check up on whether your collection is complete), and a list of retailers who stock FASA gaming material (unfortunately, this is primarily for US gamers). Still, a cracking site, and well worth hunting down if you play any of the FASA games.

If you're currently playing any of FASA's game systems, take a look at its excellent World Wide Web site for previews, discussion and more.

Your essential guide to the **arcane** Web site...

Want to know what you can expect to find when you log on to the **arcane** site? Here's a breakdown...

The opening page: From here you can access the rest of the site. You'll see an image of the latest cover, plus a brief explanation from Paul, the Editor, of what you can find in this month's issue. You can also leap straight into material which relates to your favourite games – just click on the bar which runs around the page.

How to buy arcane: This button takes you to info about where you can get **arcane** from, including a subscription form so you can subscribe directly from the Web site.

What's new? If you're a frequent visitor to the **arcane** Web site, you'll want to know what's been added to the site since you last visited. This button gives you that info – fast.

News: Here you can get hold of news from the latest issue, plus a number of stories which we think are important enough to remain on the site for some time.

Reviews: We take a selection of the reviews that you can find in **arcane** each month and post them on to our site. Once the reviews are there, they stay there, so you can access an ever-growing database of reviews past and present.

Features: In the same way that we take a selection of reviews, we also take a couple of our features and permanently stick them on the site server. So, if there's a feature you want to read from a back issue of **arcane**, you may well find it here.

The Forum: A lively place, where gamers from all over the world exchange ideas and debate issues which relate to roleplaying games, live-action roleplay and collectable card games. It's easy to use, and you can post your own rants and raves.

Conventions: There are dozens of roleplaying conventions which take place in the UK throughout the year, and this is where you can find the details of just about all of them. We try to let you know what games will be played at each con', and whether there are any age restrictions.

Links: No Web site about roleplaying would be complete if it didn't point you in the direction of other great roleplaying Web sites. And that's exactly what our Links area does.

Clubs: A list of roleplaying clubs dotted all over the country.

Players' contacts: It's our lonely hearts column, where gamers can get in contact with other gamers in their area to organise some roleplaying and CCG sessions.

Buy, sell, swap: Got a rare *Magic* card that you want to sell? This is where to turn – the multifaceted swap-shop of the roleplaying world.

What is arcane? Here we tell you what **arcane** does, and why we do it.

Point your Web browser at: http://www.futurenet.co.uk/entertainment/arcane.html to access all of these services.

Club crawl

Do you run a roleplaying club? Or a league for card players? Are you looking for new members? Well, **arcane** on-line can help. Simply send us the details of your club on the form below and we'll enter them into our forthcoming Club Directory. Please complete using block capitals.

Club name .....

Where do you meet? .....

When do you meet? .....

Which games do you play? .....

Are there any restrictions (students only, meeting fees, etc)? .....

Contact name .....

Contact telephone number .....

Contact e-mail address .....

Contact Web site .....

Send to: Peter Hill, arcane on-line, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Or you can e-mail the details to phill@futurenet.co.uk.

free reader ads

Here we are again in the reader ads, with only 83 more shopping days to go till Christmas. Even less by now, of course. Time, eh? It's a slippery eel...

games for sale

● A bargain! *Twilight 2000 (II)* + 11 supplements, £28. *Skaven Army* (300+ pieces), £150. 224 *Jyhad* cards (Black Border and rules). Call Dave for a list on 01279 452040

● *AD&D 2nd ed* plus supplements. Also *WoD, Elric, Dragons, Rifts, Shadowrun, RQ.* Stuart 01524 32747

● *AD&D,* Games Workshop, *RuneQuest, WH40K, Palladium,* plus many other books and games. Offers – Martyn 01262 674158

● Discount trading card games including *Magic, Star Wars, Star Trek, X-Files* and more. Call John 0181 993 4439

● Loads of roleplay, cards, etc. Chris on 01472 601004 for a list

● *Golden Heroes, Tank Girl, Aftermath, Top Secret, Chill, Rolemaster, Space Master, Cyberspace,* plus boardgames, supplements. Offers? Matthew 01273 540542

● *Roborally* and *Roborally: Armed and Dangerous.* Must sell together for £25. Michael 01779 841319

● RPGs, boardgames, figures, etc. Sae for list to Chas, 50 Washbrook Rd, Rushden NN10 9UX

● **Bargain of the Month** *Twilight 2000 2nd ed* +11 supplements £28. *MERP* rules £3. *AD&D* psionics handbook £3. Dave 01279 452040 for list

● Various *AD&D* supplements and adventures, vgc. Will sell or swap for *WFRP* supplements and adventures. Andy C 01734 621623

● Various games including *AD&D, Dark Conspiracy* and sundries. Dave, evenings after 6pm, 0161 718 0097

● *Warhammer* (boxed) and variety of fantasy miniatures. Also advanced *Heroquest,* £18 ono. Call Paul on 01257 260485

cards for sale

● *Star Wars, ST:TNG, ST:TNG* (AU) and *New Hope* cards. Singles, sets if quick. Serious offers. Call Martyn 01262 674158

● Cheap *M:TG* cards. For list send large sae to Chris Bloomfield, 65 Wellington Rd, Enfield EN1 2PH

● Complete sets of *Netrunner, Rage* and *Star Trek* CCGs. Will split. Robert 01733 753227

● Japanese *M:TG* for sale. Starters ¥500 *Chronicles* ¥400 plus shipping. Fax 81-52-565-9290 anytime. Attn: Conrad

Sounds a lot, but a ¥ is actually worth less than 0.56p and won't even buy you a teaspoonful of marmalade at Tokyo prices.

● *Jyhad* CCG by WotC. 180+ deck cards, 44 Vampire cards, rulebook, black border, top condition, box, gorgeous artwork. Contact Dave on 01279 452040

● *Vampire: TES* and *Dark Sov.* trades. Gary 01960 353095, weekends please

wanted

● Single cards for *ME:TW Rage* L5Rs. Will buy or swap, especially Siege or Rage Chase cards, numerous CCGs. Contact Alan on 01241 878564

● 15mm fantasy miniatures. I have loads of roleplay, etc. to swap. 01472 601004. Ask for Chris

● Black cards for *M:TG.* I have most commons, so only rares and uncommons wanted. Send lists. Stuart Miller, 8 Macleod Rd, Balloch, Inverness IV1 2JW

● *Buck Rogers* PC games. Alan Jones, 17 Water Lane, Cromford, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3QH

● Citadel *RuneQuest* figures or archive *RuneQuest* figures, any condition. Willing to pay good price. Simon 01276 855721

● Complete set of *M:TG* in mint condition. Out-of-print packs, singles and in-print rares, uncommons. Fax list to 00-81-52-565-9290 anytime. Attn: Conrad

● *Dragonlord* die for *Dragon Dice* game. Lee 0113 271 3532 after 5pm. Good price paid

● *Heresy* cards for *M:TG* cards or cash. Also *LOFR, ME:TW, Jyhad* to trade. Michael Alderton, 150 Sycamore St, Ashington, Northumberland NE63 0HJ

● *Overpower* rares wanted, buy or swap: *Psylocke, She-Hulk, Torch, Juggernaut, Iceman Mystique.* Simon 01952 245933 after 6pm

● *Mythos* CCG. Insmouth location, *Marsh Mansion.* Swap or purchase. David 0191 4179217

● Postal GM seeks copy of old TSR mini-game *Saga.* Good condition or better preferred. John 0117 976 2129

● Players (18+) wanted for range of board games and sci-fi game on Friday evenings in Norwich. Call Ken on 01603 502056

● Needed urgently – *WFRP* rulebook. If you have one to sell, please call Nick on 01752 851793

● Renegade Legion games and accessories. In good condition. Write to Barry Nelson, 39 Moray Park Terrace, Culloden, Inverness IV1 2RQ

● *Star Wars,* Empire, Jedi special edition widescreen chromium cards. Normal cards also. Contact Lee on 0113 271 3532 after 5pm

● *V:TES, Kult, Olivia, Munsters, Crow,* Gothic trading cards, etc. Send lists to 54 Bolingbroke St, Newcastle NE6 5PH

Re: **arcane** *1...*

● **arcane** 1: will pay (almost) anything for it. Try me! Phone on (+49) 511-416582 (evenings), or fax (+49) 511-458-2412

● My **arcane** 1 goes to the person who offers the most ancient heart boosters. Get in touch with Michael on 01779 841319

● Wanted (semi) urgently: issue 1 of **arcane** in good condition. Shop condition preferred where possible. £5 (+p&p). Give Martin a call on 0161 281 1418, Tuesday, Friday, Saturday evenings

£5? Ancient heart boosters?? Let's have a little order on the floor!

clubs

● Barnsley trading card club meets every Tuesday, 6pm, Pitt St Methodist Church, Barnsley. New players always welcome Contact 01226 785024

● Black Country RPS. Thu 7.30. Waterfall Inn, Waterfall Lane, Blackheath, W Mids. All ages and games. 70p a night. Steve Turner 01384 235244

● Guild of Melee and Magic – London's biggest club – 1st visit free, annual membership £5 Central – Jason 0181 715 8675 South – Jon 0181 699 9654 West – Gerald 0181 991 1297 East – Douglas 0181 553 5332

● Manticore Games Club! Cards, boardgames, RPGs! We play anything! Every Thursday, Old Bell, Hemel Hempstead – 7.30pm. Call 01442 216777

● East Midlands RPGA/Harlequins Gaming Club. Sundays 1.45-6ish at 2nd Arnold (St Mary's) Scout HQ, Atherley House, Calverton Rd, Arnold, Nottingham. Simon Stoppard 0115 921 5533, John Harris 0115 939 4185 or e-mail sara@theleys.demon.co.uk

● Redcar adventurers RPG club every Friday, 6 till 9, Redcar Library. John 01287 642523

● Roleplayers of Chester, Wednesdays 7.30pm-late, Chester Rail Club, Hoole, Chester. Contact Greg on 01606 883698 or Allison on 0151 200 6945

● Wandsworth RPG – Mon 7.30. 57a Heathfield Road, Wands. For information – Dave 0171 738 1807

contacts

● Novice *AD&D* DM seeks fellow gamers in Ringwood area. Also play *M:TG.* Phone me on 01425 477307 after 6pm

● *Netrunner* players required in the Bracknell area. Write to Sean, 59 Wylam, Bracknell, Berks RG12 8XS

reader ads

or e-mail smcclean@epSchool.demon.co.uk

● Bridgend YMCA Gaming Club, Mid Glam, noon Saturdays, Sundays from 3. Mostly harmless, contact Alan 01179 649485

● Experienced roleplayer seeks group in Falmouth area. Term time only (October-December). Matthew 01326 311162

● Inexperienced gamer wishes to join RPG club in Bangor/Belfast area, Northern Ireland. Conor 01232 421990

● Mr Johnson requires shadowrunners for urgent work in Dartford area. Further information contact Cutter 0410 415103. 16+

● *Mutant Chronicles* players wanted in Cornwall. Is anybody out there? Call Ryan 01872 560607 (Truro) after 6pm

● Players and DM needed for sci-fi *D&D*-style game. 16+. In Coleshill/Coventry areas. Contact James on 01675 481664

● Players (age 20+) needed for Bognor/Chichester area group. Various RPGs, experience unimportant. Balligan 01243 266170

● Players wanted for *Champions (Superheroes)* campaign in the Sheffield area. 18+ preferred. Peter 0114 2818806

● Two female roleplayers (18+) needed to balance the genders in Newcastle club. Insanity is compulsory. David 0191 266 2906

live action

● Experienced live roleplayer wants to get in contact with LARP groups around the London area. Call Gary 0181 749 2688

● For sale: double-linked chainmail hauberk. Fits 40" chest. Good condition, £200 ono. Contact Matt on 01274 413165

● Sheffield Fools and Heroes. Fortnightly fantasy LRP. New players wanted for ongoing national campaign. Beginners welcome. Peter 0114 2818806

fanzines and PBM

● *Roll Your Own:* issue 7 + archives. Vampire and Cyberpunk. 75p+p&p. Cheques payable to Mark Brassington, 61 Lord Nelson St, Sneinton, Nottingham NG2 4AJ

● 'On The Grey Carpet'... Read the next 4,997 words or so only in *Espylacopa 3*. £1.50. Gorgeous. Contact Wes White, Splott's Moor Farm, Wick, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 8JS

Wes reckons we called him Neil last time, so when the phone rang he said they had the wrong number. Sorry Neil, er, Wes.

● *Traveller.* New fanzine seeks submissions. Any era/milieu. Write for details to Jonathan, 23 Riverside, Chelmsford, CM2 6LL

● *The Dragon Chronicle.* Journal dedicated entirely to dragons! £1.50/$4 (bills). PO Box 3369 London SW6 6JN UK

messages

● Aura Williams. Have received no communication – was 'spell' successful? Will send Miranda Healsig ASAP. David T

● Miranda Healsig. Please find willing 'troop' and meet me at Bob's (Mannington). Before conclave. Yours forever, David T

● USS Hero from Gunboat Rona: this sector is a no-combat zone. Desist your attack or be disabled

● Tortured souls! Like to get in touch with former editors/authors. Fax (+49) 511-4582412

● Young female pagan from the Isle of Wight says: "If the telephone rings today, water it. All hail Eris. Ave discordia"

● If the champions of NI still existed, then the Bajwa would kick their asses for sure

arcane *advises that donkey kicking is a dangerous sport and should not be entered into lightly.*

● If you want to talk to real men, phone Sephton. He He Hey Hey

● Ilmar – the gnomes remember our debt of old and bring help in your hour of need

● Ilmar – why try to fight me when joining me would give you all your soul desires?

● Ivor the Orange: thanks for the £1. Send your address too and I'll send you a copy of the mag! Martin (*Reunion* Editor)

Ivor. You daft plonker.

● Lady Gillian, will you come back from shadow to me? For I truly love you. Yours always – Logan

● Miles is a really good guy. He's not the monster everyone makes him out to be.

● Referee's a psycho troll! (anagram)

Roleplayers of Chester have a club night advertised on this page. Let's hope psycho-trolls Greg and Allison's games are more challenging than their anagrams. This one only took us half a day.

● The being everyone thinks is Allen the Snotling is actually Allen's evil twin Pruney the Snotling

The return of USS Bozeman...

● Loony Loopy Leppy to the USS Bozeman. Help is at hand. I have 4 Super-kill-o-bang missiles locked on the pirate vessel. Get out of here! I'll deal with these scoundrels. Over and out

● Messages received. The Bozeman is standing by. Unnecessary crew have abandoned ship. Repairs begun. Captain Bateson

So where exactly are these bloody pirates then? Every loony loopy leppy in the sector has loped over to the shipwreck of the Bozeman and it's all gone quiet on the baddies' boat... a bit too quiet, if you ask me. I tell you, skip. I don't like it.

other stuff

What other stuff? That's the lot. Turn the last page, catch up on the adventures aboard the Nostrilhole and then wait for Friday 1st of November, when **arcane** *will once again break on to your newsstand as gloriously and sure as the virgin sun on a crisp mountain dawn.*

Unless you're Australian or something, in which case you probably read Gnome World first and the editorial last, the sun actually goes down at dawn and comes up at night and, what's worse, you'll have to wait until Christmas for issue 13, when it will be as hot as summer.

Please place my free ad under the following heading

- ☐ Games for sale
- ☐ Cards for sale
- ☐ Wanted
- ☐ Clubs
- ☐ Contacts
- ☐ Live action
- ☐ Fanzines and PBM
- ☐ Messages
- ☐ Other stuff

arcane reader ads are open to individuals and non-profit making organisations only.

Terms and conditions

- All ads are accepted in good faith
- **arcane** reserves the right to refuse or amend ads at our discretion
- We cannot vouch for the quality of goods and services offered in this section
- Under 18s must have the permission of a parent or guardian before placing a reader ad in **arcane**

November 1996

WRITE YOUR FREE AD HERE IN BLOCK CAPITALS, USING ONE BOX PER WORD

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ **Postcode** _____

SEND TO: arcane READER ADS, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BEAUFORD COURT, BATH BA1 2BW

Gnome World
PART 5
WRITERS: DAN ABNETT AND ANDY LANNING
ARTIST: ANDREW CURRIE
SOMETHING NASTY IS LURKING ABOUT THE DWARF MINING SHIP NOSTRILHOLE. AND TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, ACTING CAPTAIN SPUNKY HAS JUST FOUND OUT THE SHIP'S DOCTOR IS ACTUALLY AN ORC IN DISGUISE...
ABSALOM! ABEDNEGO! ABERGAVENNY! SPIRIT AWAKEN! BOOM SHANG-A-LANG!
OOOH. I HATES MESSING WIV MAGIC SPELLS!
YEAH, BUT A SPEAK WIV THE DEAD SPELL IS THE ONLY WAY WE'RE GONNA GET ANY ANSWERS.
SPEAK, DEAD ONE! WHAT'S AN ORC DOING ON A DWARFSHIP?
I VAS A SPECIAL AGENT FOR ZE ORC BREWERY GUILD...
ZEY HEARD OF A MYTHICAL "BEER-BLOODED" MONSTER AND SENT ME TO GET A SPECIMEN. IT'S WORTH A FORTUNE!
A JABBERWOCKY. A MONSTER FROM ANOTHER GENRE. YOU HAFF MY SYMPATHY.
YOUR LUST FOR PROFIT HAS GOT MY CREW KILLED, ORC! WHAT KIND OF CREATURE ARE WE DEALING WITH?
STICK YER BLEEDIN' SYMPATHY!
SHORTLY...
...COLLECT ALL THE SUPPLIES. YOU MEET ME AT THE LIFE-SKIFF IN TEN MINUTES!
I'LL GO RIG THE SHIP'S TURBINES TO OVERLOAD.
IN THE TURBINE ROOM...
C'MON, SMAUGY! YOU DON'T WANT TO BE AROUND WHEN THIS BLOWS!
ON DECK...
GET A MOVE ON, GRIZZLER! ALL THE SUPPLIES YOU CAN CARRY!
OKAY, I...
OH NO...
AAAIIEEEEEE!
TO BE CONCLUDED...

Ultra•PRO

HOLOGRAM PAGES

#1 CHOICE WORLDWIDE !

LOOK FOR THE Ultra•PRO Hologram SAFE STORAGE SYMBOL

Don't be Fooled by Imitations!
For the ultimate in safe storage and lifetime protection for your valuable cards always look for the **Hologram Safe Storage Symbol** available exclusively on *Ultra*•PRO® Pages

- **Universal 11-Hole Punch to fit All 2,3,4 and 6 Ring Binders**
- **Contoured, Notched Page Spine Fits Easily into Albums**
- **Super Strong Welds - Will Not Cold Crack**
- **No PVC - Acid Free**
- **Archival - 100% Safe**

Remember to ask your local retailer for *Ultra*•PRO® products. Don't accept second best.

Trade enquiries to:

Esdevium Games Ltd.

1 Pickford Street, Aldershot, Hants, GU11 1TY
Tel: (01252) 26116 • Fax (01252) 342600

Authorised *Ultra*•PRO® Master Hobby Distributor

MAGIC The Gathering®

ARE YOU READY TO PLAY?

RIVAL TWIN WIZARDS KAZZ AND ZAKK
WILL LEAD YOU THROUGH YOUR FIRST GAME OF MAGIC™,
THE BEST SELLING AND FIRST COLLECTABLE CARD GAME.

With powerful creatures and spells at your disposal, you play to win.
Strategy is the key to fun and excitement in playing Magic.

No two games are ever alike!

INTRODUCTORY TWO-PLAYER SET

© 1996 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Magic is a Trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Magic: The Gathering, Deckmaster and Wizards of the Coast are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

25599, +44 141 226 5205
Glasgow G2 8BW

Wizards OF THE COAST™